DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 348 473 CE 060 554

TITLE Project Real World: Economic Living Skills for High School Students. Module V, Citizen Participation in Canada's Market-Based Society.
INSTITUTION Federal/Provincial Consumer Education and Plain Language Task Force (Canada).
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 125p.; For related modules, see CE 060 550-553.
AVAILABLE FROM Manitoba Textbook Bureau, 277 Hutchings Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R2X 2R4, Canada ($4.25 Canadian; set of five, $26.05).
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Assertiveness; Citizenship Responsibility; *Consumer Economics; *Consumer Education; *Consumer Protection; *Consumer Science; Daily Living Skills; Deception; Decision Making; Economics Education; Entrepreneurship; Environmental Influences; Foreign Countries; High Schools; Home Economics; Marketing; Merchandise Information; Purchasing; Safety; Student Responsibility; Transparencies
IDENTIFIERS *Canada

ABSTRACT

Project Real World, a self-contained, activity-based Canadian consumer science program, provides students with systematic instruction in economic living skills. It gives students in grades 10-12 an orientation to the economic realities and opportunities in society. The program helps students understand the marketplace; manage resources; apply values, responsibilities, and considerations; act responsibly as consumer-citizens; participate in economic/government systems; and recognize entrepreneurship career opportunities. This module, the last in a series of five, contains three sections: (1) consumer rights and responsibility--safety, informed buying, making choices, speaking out, complaining, competent and ethical consumers, and the environment; (2) consumer protection; and (3) making onself heard, the consumer citizen--assertiveness, representation, and organization. Each section may contain an introduction, purpose, scope, "for the teacher," related content, choices and challenges, and activities. Many activities are community oriented. Decision making, resource management, and citizen participation are emphasized. The activities in the core program are identified in the table of contents. Sections and individual activities can be used as supplements to business education, home economics, law, economics, social studies, or mathematics topics. Transparency masters and two appendices containing a list of resource organizations and tips for working in small groups are included. (NLA)

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A Publication of the Federal/Provincial Consumer Education and Plain Language Task Force

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PROJECT REAL World

Citizen Participation in Canada's Market-Based Society

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PROJECT REAL WORLD

ECONOMIC LIVING SKILLS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

An activity-based resource to orient young people to the realities and opportunities of the marketplace.

A publication of the Federal/Provincial Consumer Education and Plain Language Task Force

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Federal/Provincial Task Force on Consumer Education and Plain Language is indebted to the six provincial departments that co-operated to develop this resource: Alberta Consumer and Corporate Affairs; Manitoba Cooperative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs; the Consumer Education and Marketplace Relations Branch, Saskatchewan Family Foundation; Ontario Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations; Quebec Office de la Protection du Consommateur; and Nova Scotia Justice. The Task Force sincerely thanks these departments for their initiative and commitment.

Special acknowledgement is given to Rosella Bannister and Charles Monsma. Their "Classification of Concepts in Consumer Education" provided the framework for the project. Special thanks also to the Consumer Education and Marketplace Relations Branch, Saskatchewan Family Foundation for co-ordinating and providing direction for the project. The Saskatchewan working group was made up of:

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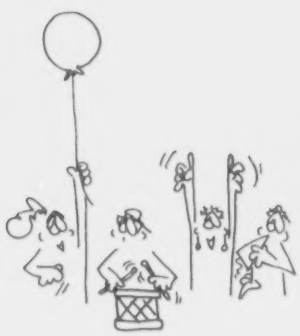

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PROJECT REAL WORLD
ECONOMIC LIVING SKILLS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Why Marketplace Education?

We live in a complex, market-based society. Every day, each of us interacts in a hundred different ways in the marketplace — managing our money, deciding on a purchase, dealing with a landlord, advising a manufacturer about a faulty product, or working in the service or retail industry. The marketplace plays a central and vital role in all Canadians' lives. In fact, it is in the marketplace, more than in any other area of our society, where we are most challenged to function effectively and contribute productively.

Technological advances and ongoing economic and social change mean that Canadian society and the marketplace will become even more complex as each year passes.

Some recent trends which have shaped today's marketplace include:

- **technological advances** such as electronic banking and automatic tellers, credit and debit cards, electronic scanners and UPC codes, and electronic gas pumps;
- **a rapid increase in the number of products and services available** - close to 1,500 new food products become available each year;
- **the increasing sophistication of marketing techniques** - for example, telemarketing and TV shopping;
- **the tremendous influence of advertising** - the average Canadian sees or hears close to 1,500 ads per day;
- **the increasing technical and chemical complexity of common household items** - today the average home has more chemicals under the kitchen sink (cleaning products) than were in a chemistry lab 50 years ago;
- **the increased earning and spending power of children and young people** - Canadian youth (15 to 23 years) spend $3.5 billion a year in the marketplace;
- **the increasing concern about environmental protection** - many consumers think about how the products they buy will affect the environment.

Today's consumer requires greater knowledge and a broader range of skills than ever before. Acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills is too important to be left to chance. Young people will be best equipped to participate effectively in Canada's dynamic and changing marketplace if they are provided with systematic instruction in marketplace education.

What is Project Real World?

Project Real World provides students with systematic instruction in economic living skills. It is a practical, relevant resource to provide high school students in grades 10 to 12 with an orientation to the economic realities and opportunities of our society.

The program will help students to:

1. Prepare for and function effectively within the rapidly changing marketplace;
2. Manage their personal and financial resources;
3. Make educated choices which reflect personal values; citizenship responsibilities; and social, economic and environmental considerations;
4. Understand their rights and responsibilities as consumer-citizens;
5. Participate effectively in economic and government systems; and
6. Recognize the importance of entrepreneurship in the marketplace and the career opportunities it affords.

Project Real World is made up of five separate modules:

1. **The Canadian Marketplace and You**
2. **Your Economic Decisions**
3. **Resource Management Skills - What Money Can't Buy**
4. **Entrepreneurship and the World of Work**
5. **Citizen Participation in Canada's Market-Based Society**

Project Real World can be used in its entirety as a separate course. The activities which make up a core program are identified in bold type in the Table of Contents. As well, sections and individual activities can be used as supplements to subjects such as Business Education, Home Economics, Law, Economics, Social Studies, or Mathematics.

Project Real World is an activity-based program not a textbook. It has been designed so that students are participating and involved, having fun while they learn basic concepts and achieve fundamental understandings about the marketplace and their role in it.

Many of the activities are community-oriented. They will take students out of the classroom and into the community where they live. They will also bring members of the community into the classroom. Whether students are learning in the classroom or in the community, the program requires them to use processes which simulate those needed to deal effectively with "real-life" situations.

Each module contains more activities than any one teacher will use in exploring a concept. This is intentional so that teachers can choose those activities which best meet the needs, interests and circumstances of their students. Teachers are encouraged to adapt and modify the activities as needed.

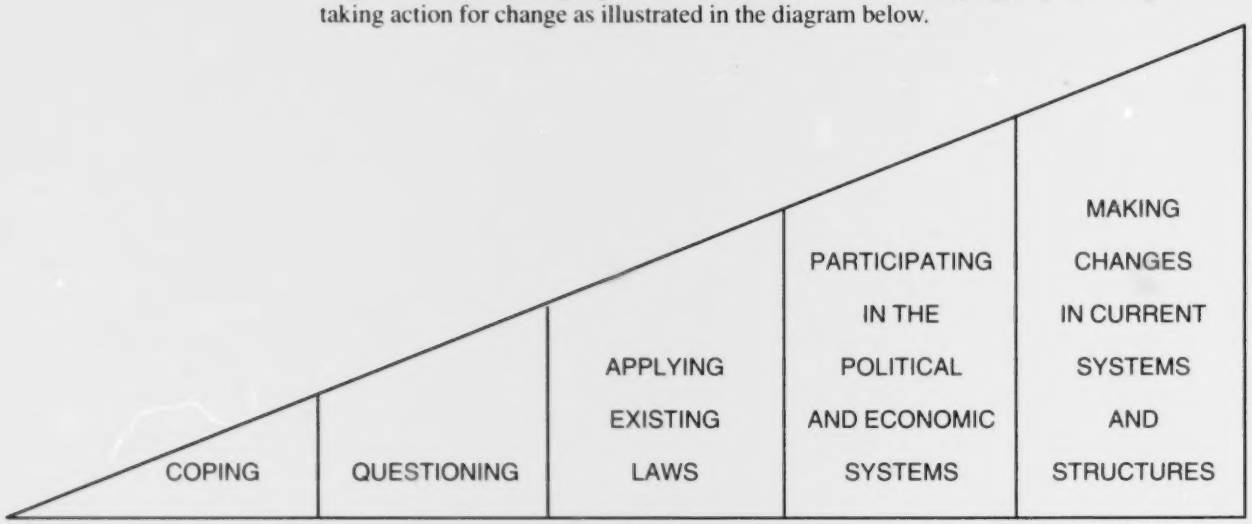
Finally, the resource is self-contained. Teachers will find all the background information they require in the "For the Teacher" section which accompanies each section.

Project Real World is Being Used Across Canada

Project Real World was developed cooperatively by six Canadian provinces. It is being used across Canada. For this reason, some sections (those relating to consumer law, for example) are written without province by province detail. Contact your provincial department of consumer affairs (the name varies slightly from province to province) to get information on the consumer laws in your province.

Project Real World's Theoretical Framework

The scope of **Project Real World** is broader than many traditional Consumer Studies programs which are often limited to teaching students to shop wisely. **Project Real World** is designed to prepare students to take an active role in influencing and shaping the marketplace. It addresses a progression of consumer skills from coping to questioning to taking action for change as illustrated in the diagram below.



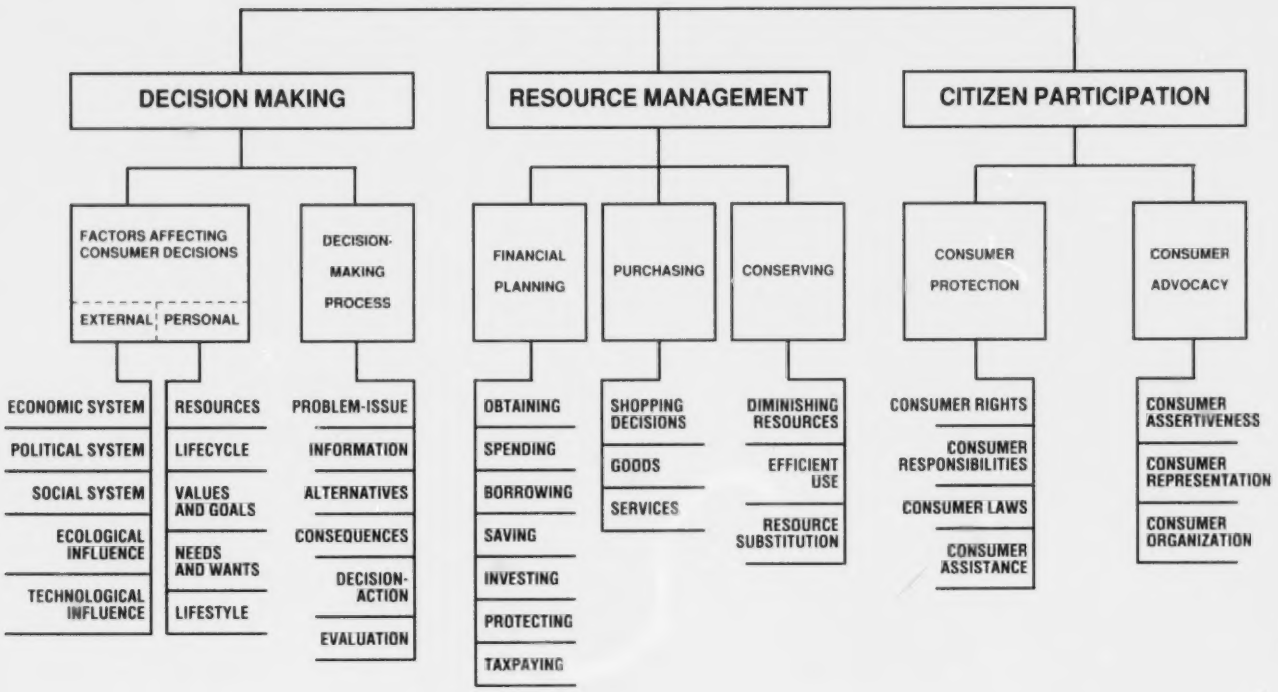
Accordingly, it includes sections on the economy, and on the political and social influences in the marketplace. It includes sections on both earning and spending money and provides students with information about how individuals and groups can bring about change.

There is heavy emphasis on decision-making throughout **Project Real World**. Decision-making, based upon personal priorities, is the key to making marketplace choices and to effecting change in the marketplace and in the economic system.

The conceptual framework upon which **Project Real World** is based appears on the next page.

Classification of Concepts in Marketplace Education

Marketplace Education is the process of gaining the knowledge and skills needed to manage economic and personal resources and take actions to influence the marketplace



Source: Charles Monsma and Rosella Bannister
Classification of Concepts in Consumer Education. South-Western Publishing, 1982. Used with permission.

PROJECT REAL WORLD
ECONOMIC LIVING SKILLS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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I. THE CANADIAN MARKETPLACE AND YOU

A. The Canadian Marketplace
- Change
- Technology and the Marketplace
- The Marketplace and the Environment

B. The Consumer and the Economy
- The Economic System
- Interdependence
- Economic Problems

C. Political and Social Systems Influence the Marketplace
- Government: Public Policy, Regulations, Interest Groups
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  - Consequences
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  - Transportation
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- Changing Careers and Lifelong Learning
- Your Career Plan

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- The Right to Choose/The Responsibility to Think Independently
- The Right to Be Heard/The Responsibility to Speak Out
- The Right to Redress/The Responsibility to Complain
- The Right to Consumer Education/
  The Responsibility to be a Competent and Ethical Consumer
- The Right to a Healthy Environment/
  The Responsibility to Protect and Respect the Environment

B. Consumer Protection Laws
- Consumer Protection Laws
- Consumer Assistance

C. Making Yourself Heard: The Consumer Citizen
- Consumer Assertiveness
- Consumer Representation and Organization

MODULE V

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN CANADA'S MARKET-BASED SOCIETY

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CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN CANADA'S MARKET-BASED SOCIETY

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CONSUMER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Introduction

The marketplace has changed considerably since the Middle Ages when Henry the wine-maker and Mary the weaver exchanged a flask of wine for a piece of cloth. In those days it was strictly "Buyer Beware". The rules of the marketplace were decided when a deal was struck.

Our marketplace today is much more complex. Canadian consumers and businesses exchange thousands of products and services each day. Guiding them in their transactions is general agreement regarding consumer rights and responsibilities.

John F. Kennedy is credited with the first formal proclamation of **consumer rights.** In 1962, in a speech to Congress, he outlined four basic consumer rights - **the right to safety, the right to be informed, the right to choose and the right to be heard.**

In 1969, a fifth right was added by Richard Nixon - the **right to redress**. Since then, two other rights have been added - **the right to consumer education and the right to a healthy environment.**

In 1985, the General Assembly of the United Nations unanimously adopted a set of consumer protection guidelines which essentially included a restatement of these basic rights.

Rights imply a matching set of responsibilities on the part of consumers - **to use products safely, to seek and use information, to choose carefully, to speak up, to seek redress, be an ethical consumer and respect the environment.**

In Canada, consumer rights are generally safeguarded in a large body of **consumer protection legislation** - an impressive array of rules, regulations and laws designed to assist the consumer in making informed marketplace choices, protect the consumer against dangerous products or services and aid those consumers who are seeking redress for unsatisfactory goods and services.

Sources of consumer protection include government agencies - federal, provincial and municipal; and self-regulating business and professional organizations.

CONSUMER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Consumer Rights	Consumer Responsibilities
Consumers have: **The Right to Safety** and protection from hazardous goods or services.	Consumers have: **The Responsibility to Beware** and alert to the quality and safety of goods and services before they buy.
The Right to be Informed and protected against fraudulent, deceitful or misleading information and to have access to accurate information and facts needed to make informed choices and decisions.	**The Responsibility to be Aware** and to gather all the information and facts available about a product or service as well as to keep abreast of changes and innovations in the marketplace.
The Right to Choose and have access to a variety of products and services at fair and competitive prices.	**The Responsibility to Think Independently** and make decisions about well considered needs and wants.
The Right to be Heard and to express and represent consumer interests in the making of economic and political decisions.	**The Responsibility to Speak Out** to inform manufacturers and governments of their needs and expectations.
The Right to Redress and to be compensated for misrepresentation, shoddy goods or unsatisfactory services.	**The Responsibility to Complain** and inform business and other consumers in a fair and honest manner of their dissatisfaction and satisfaction with a product or service.
The Right to Consumer Education and to become a skilled and informed consumer capable of functioning effectively in the marketplace.	**The Responsibility to be an Ethical Consumer** and to be fair by not engaging in dishonest practices which cost all consumers money.
The Right to a Healthy Environment	**The Responsibility to Respect the Environment** and avoid waste, littering and contributing to pollution.

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to make students aware that consumers have rights but they also have accompanying responsibilities.

Scope

This chapter on Consumer Rights and Responsibilities covers seven topics. They are:

1. The Right to Safety / The Responsibility to Beware
2. The Right to be Informed / The Responsibility to Be Aware
3. The Right to Choose / The Responsibility to Speak Out
4. The Right to Be Heard / The Responsibility to Speak Out
5. The Right to Redress / The Responsibility to Complain
6. The Right to Consumer Education / The Responsibility to Be a Competent and Ethical Consumer
7. The Right to a Healthy Environment / The Responsibility to Respect the Environment

1. THE RIGHT TO SAFETY/THE RESPONSIBILITY TO BEWARE

For the Teacher

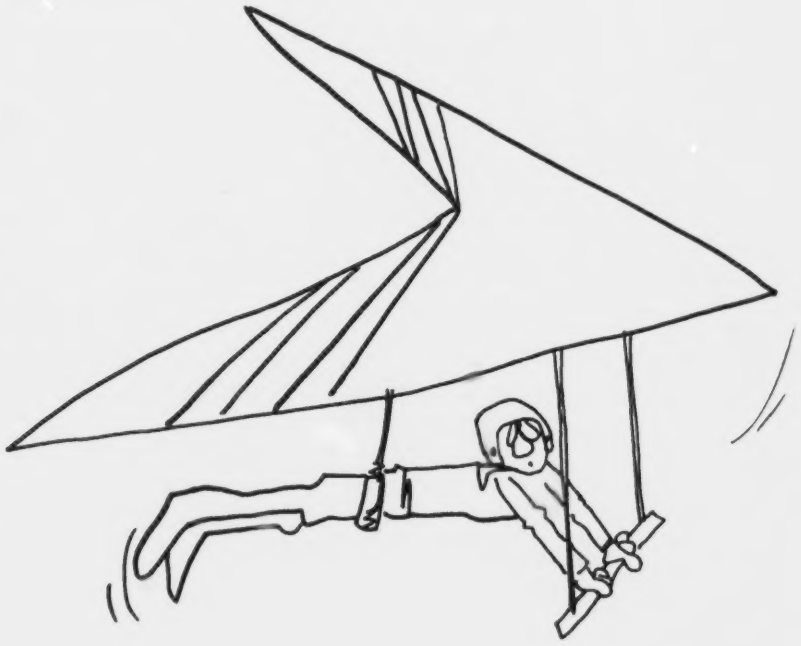
The Right to Safety
As consumers we have the right to be protected from the marketing of products and services which are potentially hazardous to our health or life. When purchasing a product intended to be eaten, applied to the body or driven, we should be able to feel confident that it will not cause physical injury or illness. A multitude of products, ranging from food, drugs, cosmetics, insecticides, toys, elevators and motor vehicles to those involving safety in the sea and air, require safety regulation.

All of us, especially young people, tend to take safety for granted and fail to consider the potential hazards in many of the products and services we use on a regular basis. In some cases, there is a lack of knowledge about the possibility of danger, or warning signs are ignored.

Manufacturers have a legal responsibility to label, identify and inform consumers about the potential hazards of products. But consumers have a moral responsibility to understand and adhere to the warnings, to follow directions and to use products and services as they were intended or designed.

The Responsibility to Beware
Consumers have the responsibility to be alert to the quality and safety of goods and services before they buy.

When goods or services are found to be hazardous, it is a our responsibility to notify the appropriate agency or manufacturer in order to rectify the problem and protect the safety of other potential consumers.



ACTIVITY #1

HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS IN YOUR HOME

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Accurately interpret hazardous products' symbols.
2. Identify hazards associated with common household cleaners.
3. Recognize the hazards associated with mixing bleach and toilet bowl cleaner.

Teacher Preparation:

Have students bring in a selection of cleaning products commonly found in the home. Duplicate class sets of the handouts "Hazardous Products' Symbols", "Can I Read the Symbols?", "Chemicals in Household Cleaners" and "Case Study".

Time:

In-class activity - two class periods.

Out-of-class activity - 60 minutes.

Procedure:

This activity has three parts.

Part I
Distribute the handout "Hazardous Products' Symbols" and review it with the class. Next distribute the handout "Can I Read the Symbols?" This handout illustrates the four hazardous product symbols inside frames representing different degrees of caution. Have students work alone or in pairs to state the meaning of each symbol.

Part II
For the second part of this activity have students work in pairs and examine the cleaning compounds brought from home, noting the names of the chemicals in each product and any hazardous product symbols on each. Have students refer to the chart on the handout "Chemicals in Household Cleaners" and write one or two sentences describing any hazards associated with each of the products they are examining.

Part III
Distribute the handout "Case Study". Have students work in pairs to answer the questions. There are no right or wrong answers to the case study. Its purpose is to stimulate thought and to make students aware of the hazards of mixing bleach and toilet bowl cleaner.

Evaluation:

Each of the three parts of this activity correlates with the objective having the same number. Objective #1 will have been achieved if students are able to accurately interpret the hazardous product symbols on the handout "Can I Read the Symbols?" Objective #2 will have been achieved if students can accurately identify potential hazards associated with specific cleaning products. To determine whether Objective #3 has been achieved consider students' answers to question #6 on the handout "Case Study". This question is "How can you prevent this from happening to you?" If students reply that they will never mix bleach and toilet bowl cleaner the objective will have been achieved.

Additional Activities:

Have students design a series of posters or fact sheets to improve consumer awareness, or design and conduct a survey to assess the degree of knowledge about hazardous products among family members and friends.

STUDENT HANDOUT:

HAZARDOUS PRODUCTS' SYMBOLS

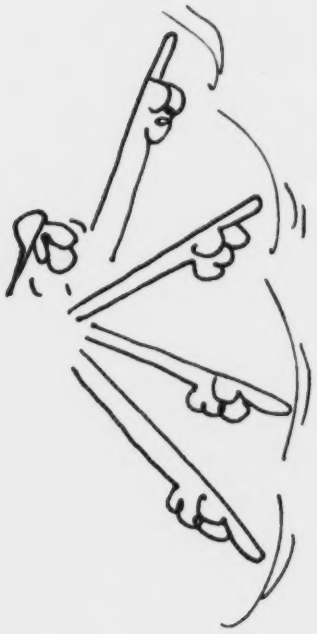
To accompany Activity #1, "Hazardous Products in Your Home"

The best way to protect yourself from dangerous chemicals in household products is to Read the Labels and Observe the Warnings.

The label will give the name of the product, the manufacturer or distributor, and the manufacturer's claim for what the product does.

The most important information on the label, though, is the part giving the symbols and warnings you must heed in order to use and store the products safely.

By Canadian law the label must explain the kinds of dangers in both symbols and words. It must give the name of the chemical used in the product which could cause harm, and describe the first-aid treatment to use if injury results from handling the product.



HAZARDOUS PRODUCT SYMBOLS

POISON

FLAMMABLE

EXPLOSIVE

CORROSIVE

The symbols above show the TYPE of hazard a product contains; the frames below show the DEGREE of that hazard (the symbols will always appear inside a frame)

DANGER

WARNING

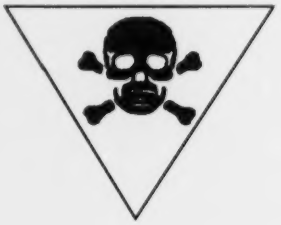
CAUTION

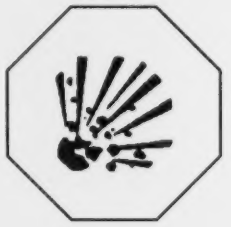
STUDENT HANDOUT:

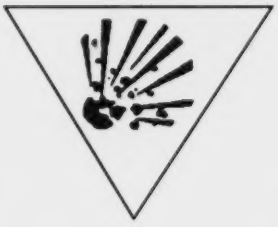
CAN I READ THE SYMBOLS?

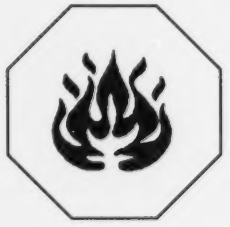
To accompany Activity #1, "Hazardous Products in Your Home"

Use the space below each symbol to tell what the symbol means.









STUDENT HANDOUT:

CHEMICALS IN HOUSEHOLD CLEANERS

To accompany Activity #1, "Hazardous Products in Your Home"

Household cleaners contain some of the most chemically reactive and physically harmful of household substances. Moreover, accidental mixing of some of these common materials can produce dangerous substances or violent chemical reactions.

Typical Compounds Found in Cleaning Agents

Name	Where Found	Purpose	Dangers
Potassium hydroxide, Sodium hydroxide (Lye)	oven and drain cleaners	chemically attack and dissolve organic matter	extremely dangerous to all parts of the body, especially eyes
Ammonia	oven and window cleaners, wax removers	chemically attack and dissolve organic matter	strong concentrations attack skin, eyes, lungs
Sodium tripolyphosphate	coffeepot cleaners	water softener and building agent	strong concentrations attack skin, eyes, lungs
Sodium phosphate	cleaners, scouring powders	water softener and building agent	strong concentrations attack skin, eyes, lungs
Sodium silicate, Sodium metasilicate	dishwashing detergent	water softener and building agent	strong concentrations attack skin, eyes, lungs
Sulfuric acid	commercial drain cleaners	chemically attack and dissolve organic matter	extremely dangerous to entire body
Hydrochloric acid	drain cleaners, toilet cleaners	remove stains and deposits	extremely dangerous to entire body
Phosphoric acid	denture cleaners, metal cleaners and polish	remove stains, dissolve rust	extremely dangerous to entire body
Sodium hypochlorite, Calcium hypochlorite	chlorine bleach	remove colour, disinfect	dangerous to entire body; never mix with anything other than soap or water
Sodium perborate	oxygen bleach, denture cleaners	remove colour, disinfect	dangerous to entire body, mildly toxic
Sodium dodecylbenzene sulfonate	detergents	dissolve grease and oil	continued contact removes protective oil from skin

Source: The Household Pollutants Guide.

Oven cleaner is the most corrosive product by far in the kitchen. It dissolves animal and vegetable tissues, a variety of plastics, metals and paint and will peel the varnish off hardwood floors. The most common consumer injuries are chemical burns, poisonings, and inhalation of the ammonia gas that cleaners produce.

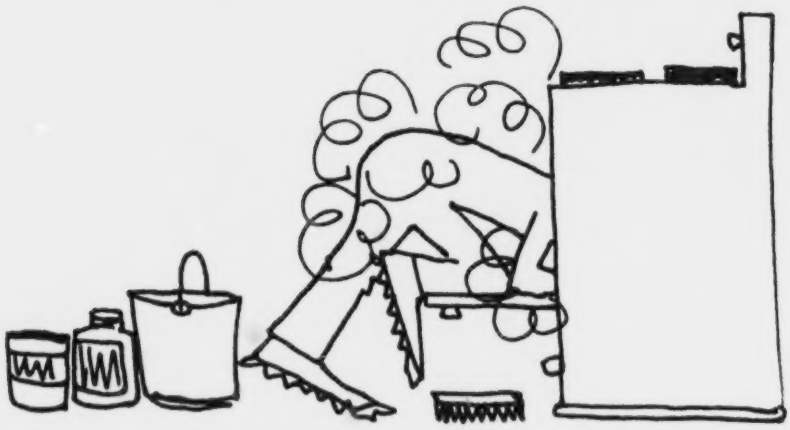
Aerosol oven cleaners are not recommended because of their polluting effects, but they are the fastest. Spray pump oven cleaners are fast and easy to use and produce less toxic mist. For comfort and safety, (according to Canadian Consumer) try the new oven pad cleaners. They are a little faster to use than paste products and virtually odourless.

Drain cleaners and toilet bowl cleaners are also highly caustic and cause many injuries. Crystal forms of drain cleaner are safer than liquid types. Always wear rubber gloves when using any cleaners, and be careful not to splash drops in your eyes or on skin. Do not mix an in-tank flush cleaner with a bowl cleaner, because together they release a toxic gas. And never mix drain or toilet bowl cleaners with bleaches - serious injury can result from the ammonia gases produced.

Detergents have caused more poisonings than any other household products. Part of the problem is that people do not always recognize the serious difference between synthetic detergents and ordinary soap. Non-phosphate detergents while less polluting to the environment are particularly hazardous to human health. A few grains of synthetic detergent rubbed into your eye can cause corneal burns which if left untreated could result in severe eye damage. If a child were to taste these detergents, s/he could severely damage the upper digestive tract with chemical burns.

Chlorine bleach when used alone is not too dangerous, but the temptation for people is to mix it with other cleaners. Mixing chlorine bleach with ammonia or vinegar generates toxic fumes which can be fatal. Strong chlorine bleach in the laundry water can weaken the fibres in fabrics. Dry bleaches are safer and less destructive than chlorine varieties. They all require care in handling and in storage.

Keep out of reach of children.



STUDENT HANDOUT:
CASE STUDY

To accompany Activity #1, "Hazardous Products in Your Home"

Mixing Cleaners

Brian was cleaning his bathroom when he noticed that the toilet bowl cleaner was nearly gone. Not wanting to run out, he added bleach (sodium hypochlorite) to the remaining cleaner. Immediately a chemical reaction occurred releasing chlorine gas. As Brian inhaled the gas he became short of breath and began to choke. He was rushed to the hospital and upon examination it was discovered that the tissue in his windpipe and lungs had been significantly damaged. Although he was able to return home, he had to stay off work for a month. At last report he was still experiencing some difficulty breathing.

Questions for Discussion

1. Was this hazard inherent in the product or was it caused by misuse or abuse of the product?
2. What were the responsibilities of the consumer in this situation?
3. What is the responsibility of the manufacturer or retailer in this situation?
4. Does a Government agency have any responsibility in this situation?
5. How could this problem be prevented in the future?

Some Possible Answers

1. The problem was created by the consumer who did not read the product labels or observe warnings not to mix these products.
2. The consumer should have read the labels carefully.
3. Warnings were given on the product. Perhaps the warnings could have been made clearer, or printed in larger type.

Safety Tips

- Toilet bowl cleaners or drain decloggers of different types or brands should not be mixed.
- After using one type of toilet bowl cleaner or drain declogger, flush with water before adding another chemical. If this is not possible, do not mix.
- Only water should be used for diluting a toilet bowl cleaner or drain declogger.
- The toilet bowl cleaner or drain declogger should always be added to the water. Never add water to the concentrated cleaning product.

ACTIVITY #2

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE USING? - SAFETY AND GROOMING PRODUCTS

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. List grooming products and over-the-counter drugs that can be potentially hazardous and identify some of the hazards associated with these.
2. Identify and evaluate sources of information about grooming products and over-the-counter drugs.
3. Locate agencies that provide information and handle complaints.

Teacher Preparation:

Ask students to bring a selection of grooming aids, over-the-counter drugs and information pamphlets and labels that come with such products to class. Duplicate a class set of the handout, "Do You Know What You Are Using?"

Time:

One class period.

Procedure:

Explain to students that in an attempt to be more like "squeaky clean", attractive, youthful televisions idols, Canadians spend millions of dollars on cosmetics and similar products, such as make-up, fragrances, shampoos, deodorants, toothpastes and creams.

The average person is constantly bombarded with ads for over-the-counter drugs and medications, self-medication has become a way of life for many. The average medicine cabinet can be as cluttered with potentially hazardous products as the cleaning cupboard.

Discuss the hazards of such products with students. Hazards include eye and skin irritation, harmful fumes, allergic reactions, flammability, drowsiness, addictiveness, toxicity when accidentally swallowed, side effects and linkages to cancer. It is important to be selective in the products you choose, and to use available information to evaluate their safety.

Have students make a list of the cosmetics and over-the-counter drugs they purchase and use on a regular basis. Circle those they know have the potential to cause problems. Indicate how they know this - e.g.; a friend told them, they saw it in an ad, they read it in the brochure or on the product label. What problems are associated with these products?

Brainstorm to identify sources of information regarding cosmetics and over-the-counter drugs. Discuss the usefulness of media ads as a source of information.

Have students examine the grooming products and over-the-counter drugs they brought to class. Which ones carry warnings concerning health or safety dangers? Do the pamphlets and brochures which accompany these products include descriptions of possible side effects or health or safety dangers?

Explain the "patch test", and if feasible, have some of the students do such a test with the products they have brought to class.

Evaluation:

To assess whether Objective #1 has been achieved, note the list of products developed by the students and their comments as to potential hazards. Their evaluation of the informational material included with products will determine achievement of Objective #2. They should have considered whether labels and brochures identify possible hazards; use, dosage, time period of use, storage and expiry date; antidote; use of the patch test.

Additional Activities:

1. Have students check the grooming products they use regularly. They should make a note of those that are particularly hazardous and on their next visit to the drug store, check the labels and instructions accompanying these products and try to find a product that is less hazardous. They might ask a pharmacist for advice.

2. Have students choose a cosmetic or over-the-counter drug about which they have concerns or with which they have had a problem. They should seek information about it from the Health Protection Branch of Health and Welfare Canada.

   Ask students why a consumer should report an adverse reaction from a cosmetic to the manufacturer or distributor and to the Cosmetic Division of the Health Protection Branch, Health and Welfare Canada.

3. Ask students to discuss with a doctor or pharmacist the merits and hazards of any over-the-counter drugs they take regularly.

ACTIVITY #3

THE UNINVITED DINNER GUEST - FOOD CONTAMINANTS

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Name the three kinds of food contaminants and list the major sources of such contaminants.
2. List ways in which consumers can prevent food contamination when handling and storing of food in the home.
3. Explain the importance of reporting all cases of real or suspected food poisoning to the appropriate authorities and describe the procedure.

Teacher Preparation:

Invite a public health inspector, nutritionist or home economist from your community to speak to the class about food poisoning. Obtain (with students' assistance) a selection of brochures, articles and pamphlets providing information on safe food handling and storage of food in the home. Pamphlets are usually available from the local public health office.

Time:

One class period.

Procedure:

Inform students that every year ten thousand cases of food poisoning are reported in Canada and it is suspected that, for every case reported, there may be one hundred unreported cases. Food contamination may be one of three different kinds: micro-organisms, filth or foreign matter, and unintentional chemicals or additives. Write these terms on the board.

Invite a public health inspector, nutritionist or home economist to speak to the class about food poisoning, safe handling and public health regulations for manufacturers and restaurants.

Ask students to brainstorm to develop a list of ways food contaminants could enter a food product, considering the various processes food goes through from farm to dinner table. Categorize these ideas according to the source of contamination - the original source of the food, the processor or manufacturer, the food seller, the consumer. Note the source with the longest list of possibilities. Account for this.

Have students share experiences they or their friends may have had when eating at home, or eating out, when there was a suspicion or actual occurrence of food contamination. Discuss what was done and the advisability of the action taken.

Explain to students that although there is legislation for food handlers and processors, there is no legislation to protect consumers from themselves. Safe handling and storage of food in the home is as important as outside of it. Discuss why it is important to report real or suspected cases of food contamination. To whom, in your community, would you report food contamination? What would you expect to happen as a result of the report?

Evaluation:

To assess whether Objective #1 has been achieved, consider the initial brainstorming activity in which students identified sources of food contamination. Assess Objective #2 by considering the discussion about safe food handling in the home.

Assess Objective #3 by considering the discussion relating to reporting cases of food contamination. Students who have met the objective will have stated that reporting cases of food poisoning alerts the manufacturer or distributor to remove items from the shelf, alerts customers who may have purchased suspected items, and notifies hospitals and health authorities to look for potential patients.

Additional Activities:

Divide students into three groups. Have group one research and report on media stories of food poisoning and indiscriminant use of pesticides or fertilizers, noting what caused the situations and the action taken. Ask group two to report on legislation for food handlers and processors and the penalties for infractions. Have group three compile a list of rules for consumers concerning the safe handling and storage of food in the home.

ACTIVITY #4

CONSUMER SAFETY - TODAY AND TOMORROW

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Identify current and long-term issues that threaten the present and future safety of citizen-consumers.
2. Explain and evaluate legislation already in effect relating to such issues and suggest possible solutions.
3. Discuss how consumers can, and should, share in the decisions being made on issues relating to public safety, by making their concerns known to the appropriate agencies or organizations.

Teacher Preparation:

Prior to this activity have students collect and bring to class newspaper and magazine articles on present and future hazards to consumer safety, including stories of accidents or potential hazards from products or situations. Use the master provided to make the Transparency, "Researching Consumer Safety".

Time:

Two class periods.

Procedures:

Explain to students that new products and services are continually being added to the marketplace and increasingly, new situations arise which threaten the present and future safety of citizens. Ask students to cite examples from current media events and discuss some of the solutions being proposed to remedy the situation.

Have students work in groups to create lists of additional present and future situations that could pose a safety problem for Canadians.

Students could research such issues as:
- the effect on workers of spending the entire day in front of desk-top computers and on children of spending long hours playing video games and watching TV
- derailment of trains carrying substances that emit toxic fumes
- the suggestion of replacing seat belts in cars with inflatable air bags
- pesticides in food
- toxic fumes/chemicals in home furnishings

Students can use the articles and clippings they brought to class as a basis for their research. Students should base their research on the following:
- identify the major problem or issue
- note legislation or actions already in effect in these or similar situations
- note other solutions being suggested and identify the individuals or agencies who have suggested these
- discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each solution

Display the Transparency, "Researching Consumer Safety" which outlines students' tasks. Have groups present a summary of their findings to the class. Allow time for other students to evaluate the suggested solutions and add others.

Discuss the degree to which consumer-citizens should take an active role in decisions about such issues. How can this be done? If you and the class feel they have presented some feasible ideas, or have strong feelings about a current issue, have them present their case in a logical and concise statement and send the statement to the agency or organization responsible.

Evaluation:

Determine whether Objective #1 has been achieved by considering students' lists of situations that could pose safety problems for Canadians. Are the lists realistic and comprehensive? Assess Objective #2 by examining the research relating to the issues identified. If the outline provided to students was followed, the research will focus on legislation, other possible solutions, and the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Assess Objective #3 through the discussion about the role that consumer-citizens should take in making decisions about issues relating to their health and safety.

Additional Activities:

Choose an issue over which the class is divided about whether present solutions are adequate or more needs to be done by industry and/or government. Have students debate the issue. Choose someone to moderate the debate, and some class members to act as evaluators and observers.

TRANSPARENCY
RESEARCHING CONSUMER SAFETY
To accompany Activity #4, "Consumer Safety - Today and Tomorrow"

RESEARCHING CONSUMER SAFETY

Students should:

- Identify the major problem or issue
- Note legislation or actions already in effect in these or similar situations
- Note other solutions being suggested and identify the individuals and agencies who have made the suggestions
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each solution

2. THE RIGHT TO BE INFORMED/THE RESPONSIBILITY TO BE AWARE

For the Teacher

The Right to be Informed

Shopping and spending money has become a national pastime for many Canadians, including teenagers. A popular sticker prominently displayed on some cars proclaims to all "born to shop".

The array of goods and services available to us is continually increasing, making it more difficult, even for "born shoppers" to make intelligent choices in the marketplace. The key to making a wise consumer decision is information - information about the identity, quality and intended use of the goods or service being considered; information about contracts, warranties, guarantees and services that accompany the purchase.

Many shoppers, especially young people just entering the consumer marketplace, buy on impulse or with little information - not wanting to take time to weigh the pros and cons or not knowing where to find and how to use available information. Many rely on the information provided by advertising. People have the right to know what they are buying and the terms of agreements they are entering into.

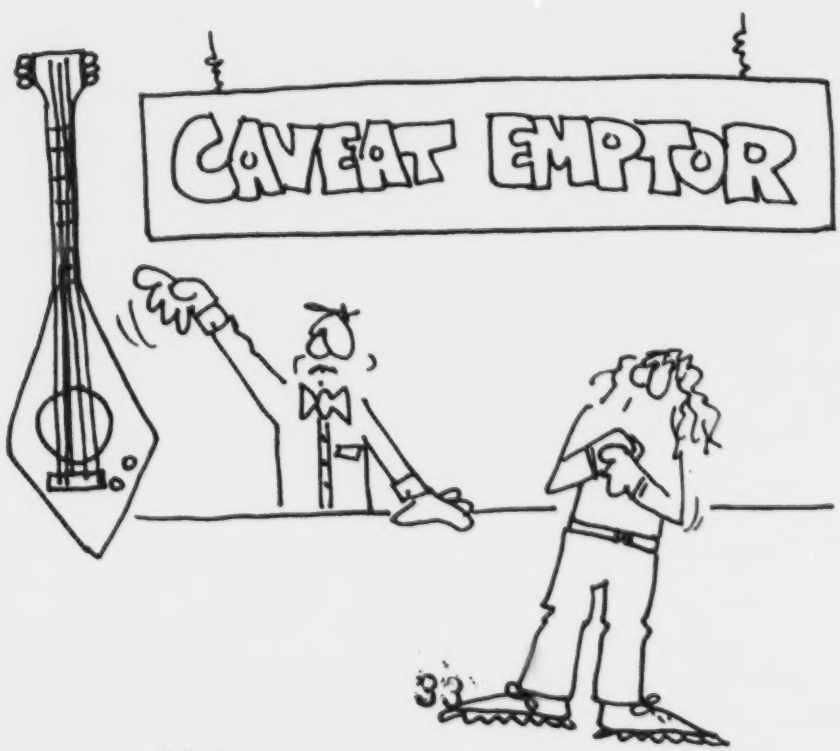
The Responsibility to Be Aware

A common marketplace phrase is CAVEAT EMPTOR, buyer beware. We have the responsibility to gather all the necessary information and facts about products and services before purchasing; to read and understand directions, contracts, warranties and agreements before signing; to be aware of legislation and regulations designed to inform and protect us. As consumers it is our responsibility to look for, understand and use pertinent information in making marketplace decisions and keeping abreast of changes and innovations in the marketplace.

Related Content:

Module III, Resource Management Skills; Chapter B, Shopping Skills; Topic 2, Food Shopping and Topic C, Clothing.

Module I, The Canadian Marketplace and You; Chapter C, Political and Social Systems Influence the Marketplace; Topic 4, Advertising, Information and Persuasion.



ACTIVITY #1

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU BUY

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. List the kinds of information consumers need about a product or service in order to make wise decisions in the marketplace.
2. Identify sources of information about products and services and make use of such information in evaluating a particular product or service.
3. Prepare a consumer report on a product or service.

Time:

One class period for preliminary work. One hour for out-of-class research. One class period for preparation of report.

Procedure:

Explain to students that before any major purchase is made, it is important to find out as much as possible about the item to be purchased. Similarly, before purchasing any service, the consumer should obtain as much information as possible about that service.

Have students work alone or in groups of two or three. Have each individual or group choose either a product or service to research. For example:

Products
- motorcycle or mini-bike
- skis, skates or other sporting gear
- car
- tent or camping gear
- gas barbecue
- home exercise equipment
- sun lamp
- stereo
- computer

Services
- renting a recreational vehicle
- taking a course in scuba diving, sky diving, swimming, skiing, woodworking, welding, etc.
- joining a fitness, diet or tanning club
- post-secondary education
- swimming pool maintenance
- arranging a trip through a travel agency
- getting a particular type of perm

Before students begin their research, have each individual or group develop a series of questions they would like to answer about the product or service they are researching. Students should first write down all of the questions they can think of. Each question should be written on a separate piece of paper.

Then students should organize the questions. They should identify the four or five most important questions and then group related questions under the four or five most important questions. As they organize their questions they may want to add or delete some.

Below is a set of prior questions that could be developed by a group researching a diet program. These questions are an example for the teacher's information only and should not be distributed to students. Students will learn more about organizing ideas if they do not follow a predetermined model.

Does it work?
- How much weight does the average person lose?
- How quickly do people lose weight?
- Do people gain the weight back after a period of time?

How is the program organized?
- Do you have to buy special food?
- Do you go to regular meetings?
- Do you receive personal counselling?
- Do you get special diet sheets?
- How often do they weigh you?

Is it safe?
- Do people who join this program suffer from weakness or fainting?
- Are there any reports of serious illness resulting from the program?

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How much does it cost?
- What is the total cost?
- How often do you pay (weekly, monthly)?
- Do you get your money back if you drop out?
- Do you get a refund if you keep the weight off for a period of time?

After students have prepared their lists of prior questions have the class as a whole brainstorm to identify a list of sources from which information about products and services can be obtained. Some possible sources include:
- Consumer magazines such as Consumer Reports and Canadian Consumer
- Interviews with people who have used the product or service
- Brochures or other printed information which accompany the product or service
- Interviews with people selling the product or service.

Finally, have students develop a research plan. If students are working in groups, they should decide who will do what. If they are working alone they should decide upon the order in which they will do specific types of research.

Give students a few days in which to do the research, then ask each group or individual to prepare a written "consumer report" on their product or service. The report should include answers to as many of the prior questions as possible. The completed reports can be posted on a bulletin board or compiled into a class "Consumer Magazine" for distribution to all students.

Evaluation:

To assess whether Objective #1 has been achieved examine students' lists of prior questions. Are they complete? Are questions arranged in a logical sequence? To assess whether Objective #2 has been achieved consider the brainstorming session in which students identify possible sources of information about products and services. Are a number of sources identified? For Objective #3, consider students' "consumer reports". Do they answer most of the prior questions?

ACTIVITY #2

WHAT'S IN A LABEL

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Identify and interpret the information supplied in food and clothing labels.
2. Describe how they would use this information when making purchasing decisions.

Teacher Preparation:

Have students bring clean empty food containers and clothing hang tags, labels and care symbols to class. Duplicate class sets of the handouts "Food Labels and the Law", "Food Additives", "The Textile Labelling Act" and "Clothing Care Labels".

Time:

One class period.

Procedure:

Note:
This activity has two parts. The first part deals with food labels, the second with clothing labels.

Food Labels:
Divide students into small groups. Give each group a few food containers and the handout, "Food Labels and the Law" and "Food Additives".

Ask students to read the handout "Food Labels and the Law". Then ask them to examine the labels on a few food containers. For each label, have them identify the information that there is to meet the requirements of the law and the extra information that has been provided voluntarily by the food manufacturer.

Many food products, such as meat, eggs and canned foods are inspected and graded. Have students look for grades on the containers they have. Identify these grades and have students discuss differences. Comment on the significance and importance of food inspection and grading.

Have students read the list of ingredients on the food labels and identify the food additives. Which additives are used most frequently? Why are they used? (The handout "Food Additives" will be useful for this task.)

Under the **Packaging and Labelling Act,** ingredients in food must be listed in order of amount, from largest to smallest. Have students note from their selection of labels, food items that are:

- largely water
- largely sugar - includes dextrose and sucrose
- largely flour or cornstarch
- high in additives
- contain few, if any, additives

Have students use the information they have gathered to discuss ways the consumer might use information on food labels to make wise marketplace choices.

Clothing Labels:
Explain to students that clothing is one of the most frequent purchases made by consumers of all ages. It accounts for a good portion of teenagers' spending and is often the greatest source of consumer dissatisfaction.

Distribute the handouts "The Textile Labelling Act" and "Clothing Care Labels" and give students a few minutes to read them. Then have each individual or group of students select one or two clothing care labels and one or two hang tags. Have the students use the information on the tags to write two short simple paragraphs. The first paragraph should explain how to care for the garment and the second should describe the fibre content and any other special features of the garment.

Have students use the information they have gathered to discuss ways the consumer might use information on clothing hang tags and labels to make wise marketplace choices.

Evaluation:

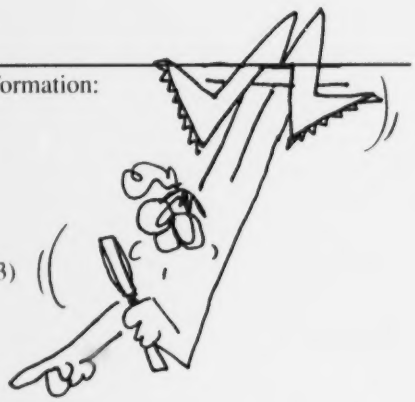
Assess Objective #1 by considering students' explanation of food and clothing labels. Do they understand what the information on the labels means? Assess Objective #2 by considering the discussion which concludes each section of the activity in which students identify ways that consumers can use labelling information to make wise marketplace decisions.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

STUDENT HANDOUT:

FOOD LABELS AND THE LAW

To accompany Activity #2, "What's In A Label"



By law all food labels must show the following information:

The Common Name
- the name by which the food is generally known
  i.e.: apple juice, peas
- in both English and French

Metric Net Quantity
- by volume (ml, l); weight (kg, g); or count (1, 2, 3)
- in English and French

List of Ingredients
- in descending order of proportion by weight
  i.e. if the largest part of a product is potatoes, potatoes must be the first item on the list
- spices and seasonings (not including salt) may be shown at the end of the list in any order
- in English and French

Name and Address of the Producer
- must use legal registered company name
- in English or French

Best Before Date
- "Best Before" date must be clearly marked

Storage Conditions
- if a food must be stored under conditions other than normal room conditions, those storage conditions must be listed on the label
- in both English and French

Artificial Flavouring
- if a label infers a natural flavouring source (i.e., has a photo of an apple), but uses artificial flavouring, the label must state, near the picture, that artificial flavouring has been added

Serving Size
- if the number of servings is shown, the size of serving must be listed

Added Nutrients
- if nutrients (vitamins and minerals) have been added to a food, the label must show the content of the nutrient in the food
- must be expressed as a percentage of the Recommended Daily Intake for that nutrient
- may also state "enriched with ...", "fortified with ..." or "vitaminized with ..."

Additional Recommendations for Meat and Poultry

Packaging Date
- date product was packaged

Grades and Standards
- meat and poultry are graded A, B and Utility. When you see these gradings, you know that the meat or poultry has been graded according to federal standards
- all grades are equally nutritious. Flavour and tenderness vary from grade to grade

Previously Frozen
- if meat, fish or poultry have been frozen and then thawed, the words "previously frozen" must be on the label or on a sign close to where the food is sold
- such food should be eaten immediately or cooked before it is refrozen

STUDENT HANDOUT:

FOOD ADDITIVES

To accompany Activity #2, "What's In a Label?"

Food additives serve many functions. Sometimes they help to preserve a food, sometimes to enhance the flavour or texture. Some food additives serve more than one purpose. The following is a partial list of food additives and the functions they play in the food we eat.

Type	Function	Examples	Foods in which these Additives may be found
Anticaking agents	Keep powders free running	Magnesium carbonate	Icing sugar
Antifoaming agents	Prevent foaming during the manufacture of foods such as jam	Mono and diglycerides	Jam
Bleaching and Maturing agents	Hasten the natural process of whitening and maturing of wheat flour	Chlorine Vitamin C	Flour and Fruits
Carrier or Extraction Solvents	Used to dissolve flavours, colours and spices	Ethyl alcohol, Glycerol, Mono and diglycerides	Vanilla extract
Colours	Give food an appetizing appearance	Carotene	Butter and Cheese
Firming and Crisping agents	Maintain the texture of fruits and vegetables	Calcium Chloride Calcium Sulphate	Canned vegetables
Glazing and Polishing agents	Make food surfaces shiny; sometimes protects food from spoiling	Glycerol Acacia Gum (gum arabic)	Candies
Food Enzymes	Act as catalysts to initiate desired chemical reactions	Rennet, Papain and Pepsin	Rennet is used to curdle milk in the making of cheeses
Humectants	Maintains desired moisture levels	Sorbital, Glycerol, Mono and diglycerides Propylene Glycol	Shredded coconut Marshmallows
pH Adjusting agents (acids, alkalis and buffering agents)	Control the acidity or alkalinity (pH) of foods; modify flavour slightly	Sodium Bicarbonate Calcium Carbonate (chalk) Calcium Sulphate Citric Acid Lactic Acid Sodium Citrate	Baking Powder
Preservatives	Inhibit the growth of moulds,yeasts or bacteria; preventrancidity and oxidative discoloration	Sodium Diacetate Citric Acid Ascorbic Acid (Vitamin C) Butylated Hydroxyanisole (BHA) Calcium Propionate Propionic Acid Propyl Gallate Sodium Nitrate/Nitrite	Bread Fruit Oil

Type	Function	Examples	Foods in which these Additives may be found
Pressure Dispensing Agents	Act as propellants to dispense foods such as whipped toppings from aerosol containers	N-butane Isobutane Nitrous Oxide	Aerosol Whipped toppings
Release agents	Help food separate from surfaces it touches during manufacturing or transport	Mineral Oil Mono and diglycerides Sorbitol Lecithin	Baked Goods (to remove from baking pans without sticking)
Release agents	Substances used to sweeten foods other than conventional sweeteners such as sucrose, fructose or glucose	Sorbitol Aspartame	Candy, Whipped Toppings, Pudding
Sequestering agents	Combine with metallic elements in food, preventing reactions causing colour or food deterioration	Citric Acid Sodium Citrate	Fruits and Vegetables
Yeast Foods	Substances that supply food for yeasts	Calcium Sulphate Calcium Carbonate (chalk)	Bread Beer
Miscellaneous agents	A variety of food additives: carbonating agents in soft drinks, plasticizing agents in gum, deodorizing agents in fats and oils, foaming agents in beverages	Sodium Bicarbonate Caffeine	Gum Soft Drinks etc.

Source: *Food Additive Pocket Dictionary*, Health and Welfare Canada. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1990.

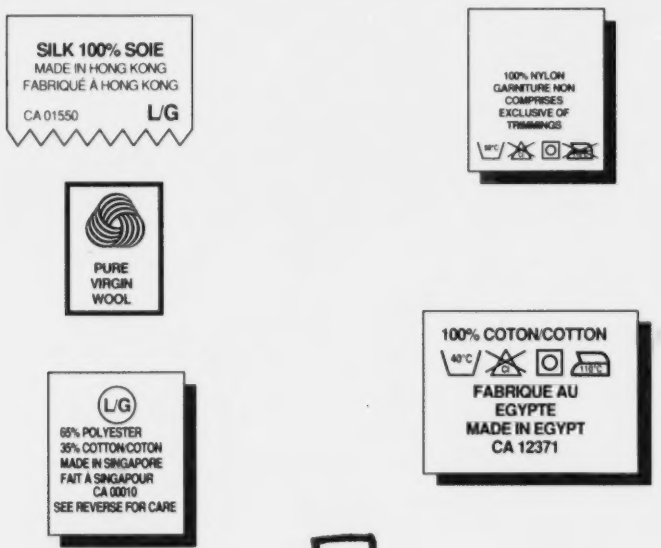
STUDENT HANDOUT:

THE TEXTILE LABELLING ACT

To accompany Activity #2, "What's In A Label"

Under the Federal **Textile Labelling Act**, clothing manufacturers are required to attach a permanent identification label to their products. To be permanent, a label must stay with the garment and be legible over a period of at least ten cleanings. The label must list all fibres that make up 5 percent or more of the total fibre content of the garment. Contents must be listed by generic (or common) name in order of predominance, from most to least (by weight). This law applies to most clothing, however, it does not apply to handbags, carrying cases, belts and ornaments.

Some examples of labels which identify the fibre content of garments appear below.



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STUDENT HANDOUT:

CLOTHING CARE LABELS

To accompany Activity #2, "What's In a Label".

Clothing care labels are not required by law but most manufacturers use them. Manufacturers who choose to use the labels must use the colours and symbols authorized by Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada. These symbols appear below.

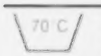
Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada has introduced care symbols for textile articles — symbols designed to guide you in selecting the most appropriate care procedure. If the care procedures indicated by the symbols are followed, the article should not shrink, stretch, or change colour beyond acceptable limits.

A red symbol means Stop! Don't do it!

An amber symbol means Caution! Use extra care! Follow special instructions.

A green symbol means Go! O.K. Do it!

The washtub symbols tell you how, or how not, to wash the garment: the variations are as follows:



Machine wash in hot water (not exceeding 70°C) at a normal setting

Machine wash in warm water (not exceeding 50°C) at a normal setting.

Machine wash in warm water (not exceeding 50°C) at a gentle setting (reduced agitation).

Machine wash in lukewarm water (not exceeding 40°C) at a gentle setting (reduced agitation).

Hand wash gently in lukewarm water (not exceeding 40°C).

Do not wash.

The triangle symbols tell you when, and when not, to use chlorine bleach. The "Cl" stands for chlorine bleach.

Use chlorine bleach with care. Follow package directions.

Do not use chlorine bleach.

The square symbols tell you how to dry items, as follows:

Tumble dry at medium to high temperature and remove article from machine as soon as it is dry. Avoid over-drying.

Tumble dry at low temperature and remove article from machine as soon as it is dry. Avoid over-drying.

Hang to dry after removing excess water.

"Drip" dry – hang soaking wet.

Dry on flat surface after extracting excess water

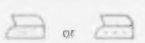
The circle symbols tell you what may, or may not be dry-cleaned.

Dry clean.

Dry clean, tumble dry.

Do not dry clean.

The iron symbols tell you what may, or may not, be ironed and at what temperature.



Iron at a high temperature (not exceeding 200°C). For example, this is recommended for cotton and linen.

Iron at a medium temperature (not exceeding 150°C). For example, this is recommended for nylon and polyester.

Iron at a low temperature (not exceeding 110°C). For example, this is recommended for acrylic.

Do not iron or press.

Adapted from: Leet, Don R. and Driggers, Joann. (1984). *Economic decisions for Canadian Consumers*. Markham, Ont.: Wadsworth Publ. Used with permission.

ACTIVITY #3

ADVERTISING: INFORMATION OR PROPAGANDA?

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Suggest how a consumer might differentiate between the informational and the promotional aspects of advertising.
2. Give examples of false and misleading impressions given by some ads.
3. Give examples of Canadian regulations, codes, standards and guidelines that apply to advertising and identify the agencies responsible for administering these.

Teacher Preparation:

Berfore the beginning of class have students videotape a selection of television ads and write to some of the agencies identified on the handout "Regulating Canadian Ads" to get more detailed information about the legislation related to advertising.

Students should also bring a selection of ads from newspapers and magazines to class.

Duplicate class sets of the handouts "Regulating Canadian Ads" and "Advertising - What to Watch For".

Time:

One or two class periods.

Procedure:

Show some of the videotaped television ads. Have students identify advertisements they find particularly interesting/effective. Have them identify the parts of the ads content that provide valid information and the parts that are propaganda - trying to influence consumers to buy. Have them consider the words used, tone, visuals, feelings generated, setting, bias, appropriateness for product, etc. Have students further evaluate the ads for things that could be misleading or deceptive, that contravene public decency or good taste; that represent a particular lifestyle.

Have students examine the material received from the agencies listed on the handout "Regulating Canadian Ads" to determine the existing Canadian laws and standards. Have a class discussion about the need for these rules.

Evaluation:

The first part of the activity requires that students examine ads and distinguish between those parts of the ads that are intended to inform and those parts of the ads that are propaganda. Use the results of students' analysis to assess whether Objective #1 has been achieved. In the second part of the activity, students evaluate ads for things that are misleading or deceptive. Use the results of this analysis to assess whether Objective #2 has been achieved. Finally, students are asked to research Canadian advertising regulations and organizations to determine the laws and standards in place. Use the results of this research to assess Objective #3.

Additional Activities:

Have students select an ad which they find particularly misleading or offensive and write to the sponsor and appropriate agencies voicing their concern.

STUDENT HANDOUT:

ADVERTISING - WHAT TO WATCH FOR

To accompany Activity #3, "Advertising: Information or Propaganda?

Misleading advertising might include:

- **Outright falsity** - for example, mouth bacteria don't cause colds or sore throats, therefore mouthwash cannot be said to relieve or prevent colds or sore throats.
- **Illusions** - illustrations that make items look bigger, more appealing.
- **Claims of uniqueness** - claims that a particular feature of a product makes it unique when in fact there are many similar products on the market.
- **Claims of newness** - when only a superficial change in the colour, formula, package, etc. of a product has been made.
- **Inaccurate representation of test or research results** - tests not properly performed, no control groups, biased testers, invalid procedures.
- **Puffery** - hype that isn't intended to fool anyone - for example, mermaids recommending tuna, a Green Giant who grows corn.
- **Misleading price** - for example, quoting a price that is different from that in the store.
- **Testimonials** - famous people endorsing or recommending certain products.
- **Omission of important facts** - for side effects of the product are not discussed or revealed.

Emotional advertising

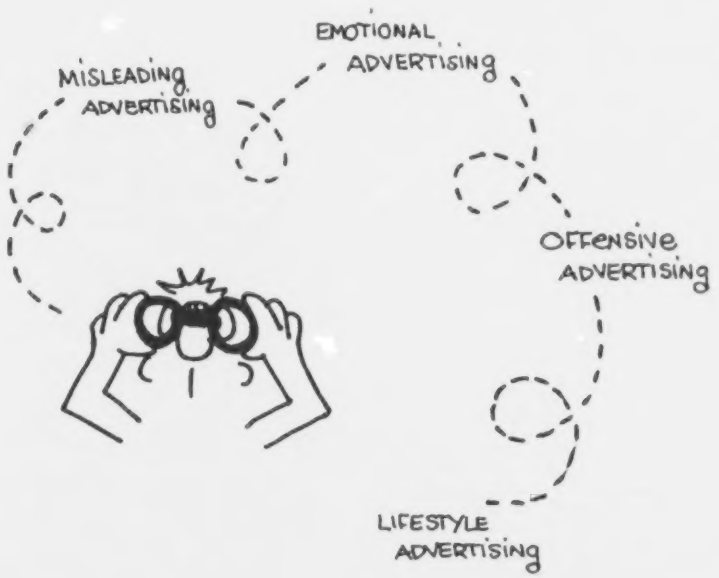
- Data and facts are replaced by psychological appeals or the creation of product images. Some advertising attempts to convince people that they'll be happier, more successful or more popular if they use a particular product.

Offensive advertising

- Sex-role stereotyping, racial stereotyping, offensive feminine hygiene advertisements (complaints resulted in special code dealing with such advertisements).
- Advertisement that is vulgar, suggestive or offensive to public decency
- Advertisement that unfairly criticizes products or services of other advertisers
- Advertisements that deal with violence
- Derogatory inferences to famous people, institutions, religion.

Lifestyle advertising

- Advertising that promotes goods and services by suggesting inadvertently, that the product will promote an appealing lifestyle. Such advertisements are often directed at teenagers, since the actors are often young adults who become role models.



STUDENT HANDOUT:

REGULATING CANADIAN ADS

To accompany Activity #3, "Advertising: Information or Propaganda?

Canadian regulations, codes and guidelines applying to advertising are particularly tough and complex. The federal Competition Act legislates against misleading or deceptive advertising particularly in regard to price. The Competition Act is a Canadian law.

The Canadian Advertising Foundation administers a Code of Advertising Standards that most advertisers have voluntarily agreed to follow. It is not a law. For this reason, the Canadian Advertising Foundation is often called a self-regulating body. The Code of Advertising Standards that it administers deals with misleading or deceptive advertisements, advertising that is in questionable taste and advertisements that contain irritating content or whose style of presentation is irritating to the public.

Other self-regulating bodies include the Telecaster Committee of CTV Television Network Ltd., the Canadian Association of Broadcasters, the Canadian Broadcasting Corp., the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission, the Periodical Marketers of Canada.

Addresses from which further information may be obtained are:

- **The Competition Act** - write to the federal department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs at: Place du Portage, (Hull), Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0C9, or contact one of this department's regional or district offices located in most major Canadian cities.
- **The Code of Advertising Standards** - write to the Advertising Standards Council at 350 Bloor Street East, Suite 402, Toronto, Ontario, M4W 1H5, or to one of the council's regional offices as follows:

Advertising Standards Council - B.C. Region
P. O. Box 3005, Vancouver, B.C.
V6B 3X5

Alberta Advertising Standards Council - Calgary
P. O. Box 6630, Station "D"
Calgary, Alberta
T2P 2E4

Alberta Advertising Standards Council - Edmonton
Box 3000
St. Albert, Alberta
T8N 1N3

Advertising Standards Council - Saskatchewan
P. O. Box 1322
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4P 3B8

Advertising Standards Council - Manitoba
Box 1001
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 2W3

Advertising Standards Council - Atlantic Region
P. O. Box 394, Station "M"
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 2P8

- **CTV Television Network** - write to 42 Charles Street E., Toronto, Ontario, M4Y 1T5 or write to the CTV affiliate nearest you.
- **The Canadian Association of Broadcasters** - write to 350 Sparks Street, #306, P.O. Box 627, Station B, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5S2 or to one of the regional associations:

BCAB (B.C.): T. Peacock, CKWX/CKKS-FM
1275 Burrard Street, Vancouver
British Columbia V6Z 1Z8
604/873-2599 - FAX 873-0877

BAA (Alberta): D. Dietrich, CHAT
P. O. Box 1270, Medicine Hat
Alberta T1A 7H5
403/529-1270 - FAX 529-1292

B (Western): V. Trall, CHAB
116 Main Street N., Moose Jaw
Saskatchewan S6H 3J7
306/694-0800 - FAX 693-3058

BAM (Manitoba): D. Sexsmith, CJOB
930 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg
Manitoba R3G 0P8
204/786-2471 - FAX 783-4512

CCBA (Ontario/Quebec): K. Clingen, CJSS
237 Water Street E., Cornwall
Ontario K6M 1A2
613/932-5180

CRTF /Association Canadienne de la Radio et Television Francaise):
L. Audet Cogeco Inc.,
1 Place Villa Marie, Montreal
PQ H3B 3P2
514/874-2690 - FAX 874-2625

AAB (Atlantic): R. Mathers, CFNB
P.O. Box 217, Fredericton
New Brunswick E3B 4Z4
506-459-5555

- **The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)** - write to P.O. Box 8478, Ottawa, Ontario, K1G 3J5 or to the CBC radio or television station nearest you.
- **The Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission**, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0N2.
- **The Periodical Marketers of Canada**, 20 Toronto Street, #400, Toronto, Ontario, M5C 2B8.

3. THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE /THE RESPONSIBILITY TO THINK INDEPENDENTLY

For the Teacher

The Right to Choose
The Canadian marketplace operates as a free-enterprise system. This means that Canadian consumers have the right to a variety of products and services at competitive prices. The right to choose includes choice among a variety of features, qualities and prices; choice among a number of manufacturers and sellers; choice to buy or not to buy.

The Responsibility to Think Independently
The responsible consumer needs to distinguish between wants and needs and make buying decisions knowledgeably and wisely. Intelligent use of buying power encourages ethical business practices and influences the products and services produced and offered for sale.

The responsible consumer shops around; compares prices, products and services; and voices complaints when products and services prove unsatisfactory.

ACTIVITY #1

CHOICE IN THE MARKETPLACE - COMPARISON SHOPPING

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Recognize that people comparison shop in order to identify the product or service that best meets their needs.
2. List the steps to follow when comparison shopping.

Time:

One-half class period.

Procedure:

Several of the activities in the shopping skills section of **Project Real World** are comparison shopping exercises, thus students may already have some experience with comparison shopping. This activity requires them to summarize information that they already know. The activity has two parts.

Part I

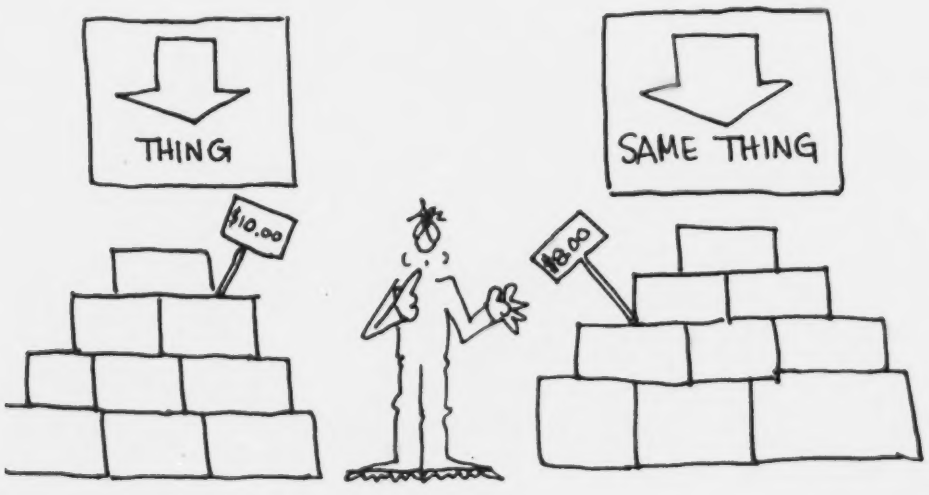
As a class discuss the reasons why people comparison shop. It is important that students understand that comparison shopping doesn't always mean looking for the lowest price. It means identifying the product or service that best suits an individual's needs. Some people may give the highest priority to quality, others may be looking for an item in a particular colour or style or one that has certain features.

Part II

Divide students into groups of three or four. Ask each group to identify the steps in comparison shopping. Students might write all of the steps down on pieces of paper and then arrange them in the correct order. The actual steps and their order will vary from group to group. This is to be expected because individuals take different approaches to comparison shopping. However, it is important that all lists include three crucial steps:

1. Identify that you need a product or service and how you intend to use it.
2. Get information about the products or services available.
3. Select the product or service which most closely matches your needs.

As students are working, circulate among the groups and use guided questioning to ensure that all students include these three crucial steps.



Most students will expand upon step #2 to a considerable extent. Some sub-steps which groups might include in step #2 are:

- Go to stores or study catalogues and newspaper ads to identify potential products or services.
- Ask people who have used some of the products or services you've identified.
- Research product test results at the library. **Consumer Report**, and the **Canadian Consumer** are good sources of information.
- Examine the products or services for sale at various stores and compare such factors as the quality, price, refund and exchange policy, warranties, services provided, reputation of the company, method of payment and so on.
- Add other possible cost involved - delivery, installation, operating, maintenance, taxes, etc.

Evaluation:

To determine whether Objective #1 has been met consider the discussion during part I of this activity. Do students recognize that people comparison shop in order to identify the product or service which best meets their needs? For Objective #2, consider the list of comparison shopping steps that students compile. Do the lists include the three crucial steps:

1. Identify what you need in a product or service;
2. Get information about the products and services available; and
3. Select the product or service which most closely matches your needs.

ACTIVITY #2

COMPETITION IN THE MARKETPLACE

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Explain the effect of competition on consumer choices.
2. Give examples of things businesses do to gain the consumer dollar in a competitive market.

Time:

One class period.

Procedure:

Remind students that the Canadian marketplace operates under a free enterprise system. Discuss what this means. Students should understand that in a free enterprise system consumers have access to a wide variety of products and services at competitive prices; that consumers can choose products with a variety of features, qualities and prices; can choose between a number of manufacturers and sellers; and they can choose to buy or not to buy.

Have students make a list of consumer products for which there is keen competition in the marketplace, such as fast foods, clothing, cars, cosmetics. Discuss the methods used by businesses to encourage consumers to choose their products over those of the competitor including cost, service, convenience, advertising, options, etc.

Have students choose an everyday product such as toothpaste, shampoo or laundry soap. Then ask them to visit grocery and drug stores and chart the brands, prices and claimed differences. They may also want to examine ads for these products. Discuss how real the differences are and the techniques marketers use to suggest differences.

Evaluation:

Assess Objective #1 by considering students' responses during the discussion on the effect of free enterprise on consumer choices. Do students understand that in a competitive system consumers can choose among a wide variety of products and also choose either to buy or not to buy? Assess Objective #2 by considering the discussion about things that businesses do to encourage consumers to buy their products, and students' surveys of the ways that specific products are marketed. In both cases, students should realize that advertising options, service, price and convenience are all used by businesses to promote sales.

Additional Activities:

Have students write stories of imaginary societies where there is no competition or choice. What would food and clothing be like? What prices would be charged for consumer products?

Have students identify those services or products in our society which are monopolies such as power and telephone services. Discuss why government permits these services to be monopolized. What are the advantages and disadvantages to the consumer?

4. THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD / THE RESPONSIBILITY TO SPEAK OUT

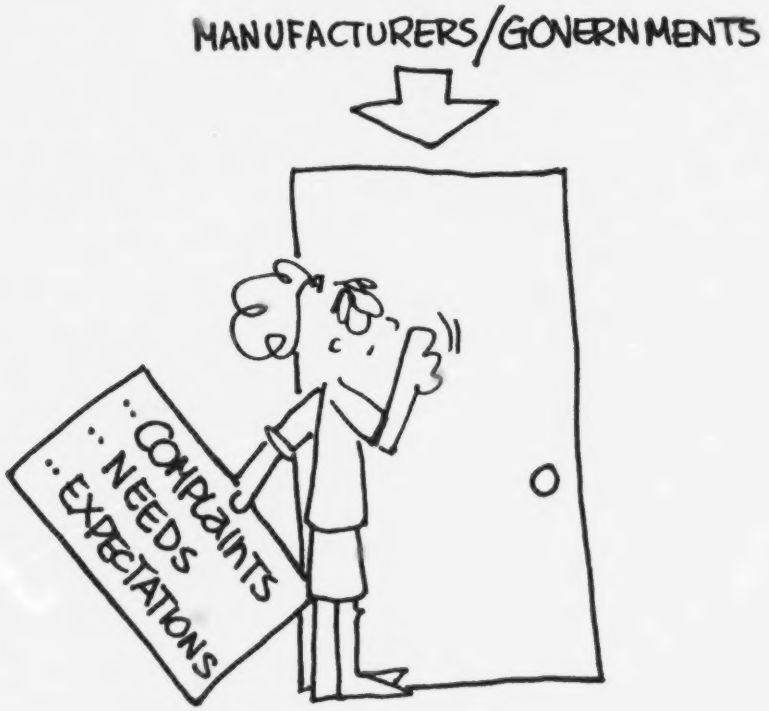
For the Teacher

The Right to Be Heard includes the assurance that consumer interests and problems of consumers will receive full consideration from all levels of government during the development of policy and legislation. Manufacturers, as well, should be ready to listen and to act on complaints and issues of concern to consumers.

The Responsibility to Speak Out
We all have the responsibility to speak out and inform manufacturers and governments of our needs and expectations from the marketplace.

The people in official capacities who speak on behalf of consumers include those on advisory boards, regulatory commissions and boards of directors.

Students are the citizens who will shape the future. They need to be provided with motivation and skills to influence and work co-operatively with producers and sellers, and with methods of effective representation in the political arena.



ACTIVITY #1

PET PEEVES: THE VALUE OF THE CONSUMER COMPLAINT

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Identify a variety of common concerns consumers might have with products and services.
2. List various actions consumers can take to remedy or express their concerns.
3. Explain and practise a variety of options to convince a manufacturer or supplier to make changes.

Teacher Preparation:

Access the street address and phone number of manufacturers and suppliers of products and services, and public library directories of business personnel.

Time:

One-half class period for introductory activity. One hour out-of-class time to contact companies. One-half class period for follow-up.

Procedure:

Have students share their pet peeves about products in the marketplace, such as: containers that are hard to open, equipment that is hard to clean, packages that are half full, things that wear out too quickly, etc. Note those that are most common on the board.

Brainstorm for a list of things a consumer could do about these. Options include: nothing, except complaining to their friends, complaining to a sales clerk or the store manager, notifying the manufacturer or distributor, informing a government department or other agency, or refusing to buy the product or service.

Discuss what happens if no one complains or expresses a concern. Note the advantages of consumer action, such as: encouraging complaints from others, alerting others to potential hazards, informing producers, sellers and manufacturers, promoting self-satisfaction and confidence, and hastening legislation.

Have students select one problem that concerns them and contact stores, manufacturers, businesses and appropriate agencies by letter or phone, and then report the results of this action to the class. If these efforts produce no results, discuss other action that might be taken.

Evaluation:

Assess Objective #1 by considering students' lists of pet peeves about products. Have students identified some major sources of dissatisfaction with products and services?

Assess Objective #2 by considering the brainstorming session in which students identified things that consumers can do about products and services that they're dissatisfied with. Have students identified a range of options?

Assess Objective #3 by analyzing the actions that students take to inform appropriate individuals or agencies of their dissatisfaction.

Additional Activities:

Have students identify products and services with which they have been particularly pleased. What should they do? Discuss the value of "bouquets".

ACTIVITY #2

SPEAKING UP - TAKING ACTION

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Understand ways in which interest groups influence change.
2. Identify and implement projects that benefit the school and the community.
3. Organize collectively toward the achievement of a desired change/goal.

Time:

Two or three class periods.

Procedure:

Have students discuss what they know about small action groups. Point out that small grassroots projects are often the larger building blocks of larger movements. Suggest that the class is going to become a community action group.

Have the class identify an issue they wish to pursue or a project they wish to take on that would benefit your school or community. For example:
- removing "junk" food from the cafeteria
- starting a special interest group on consumerism
- having a public building categorized as "non-smoking" or made more accessible to the disabled
- starting a school waste recycling program
- identifying highway or street hazard areas
- survey of seat belt use and child restraints
- developing proposals for waste disposal
- writing a guide to community resources, establishment of an information hotline
- other

Have students determine their personal opinion on the issue and work in groups with others who share their opinion to collect facts and information to support their position. Students should prepare a concise, well-stated written outline that expresses and explains their position.

A successful consumer action group requires the services of people with a variety of personal skills. There is a need for people who can organize effectively; critical thinkers to analyze the situation; people who can write and speak coherently and concisely; people who interact well with others; assertive people who can pursue issues confidently without violating the rights of others.

The steps in forming an action group are outlined below. Select students to participate, each according to their particular skills, interests and expertise. You may want to add extra steps of your own choosing.
- hold initial meeting to define the issue, draw up a list of goals, elect a board of directors or assign key personnel
- have elected group organize the activities, assign duties, set agendas and time lines and report back to entire group for clarification, input and possible modification
- hold a series of meetings to report on progress, decide on further action, determine when goals have been attained
- if and when activity is completed, send out a press release, write notes of appreciation
- share feelings of accomplishment with group members

Tasks should include:
- publicity and press coverage - school and/or local newspaper, school bulletin boards, P.A. announcements, leaflets, etc. to inform of activities, issue important statements, report on progress
- networking with people and groups who can assist you meet your goals
- planning a media release or media conference ("media" could be appropriate school personnel, if the issue is a school-related one)
- informing others and seeking support through lobbying, leafleting, getting signatures, holding a special activity day or other action appropriate to reaching goals

Have students brainstorm to determine:
- advantages - personal and societal - in getting involved
- reasons more citizens don't get involved in consumer issues
- ways to encourage increased citizen involvement

At the end of the activity, have students share ideas about the personal and societal advantages of getting involved in issues and projects that affect consumer-citizens. Encourage students to continue their involvement by taking on other projects or by joining an established action group as a supporter or volunteer.

Evaluation:

Evaluation of the activity should be based, not so much on the attainment of the group goal, but on the process involved - the way in which the group organized itself, the skills displayed by the members in the assigned tasks, the degree of involvement and commitment shown.

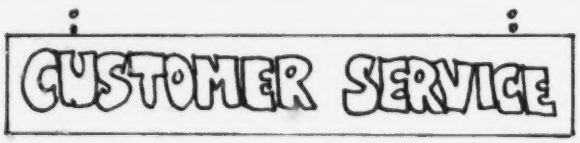
Students could be asked to work with a teacher in designing an evaluation chart that would measure these factors and a mark could be assigned by the teacher, the individual student and the class.

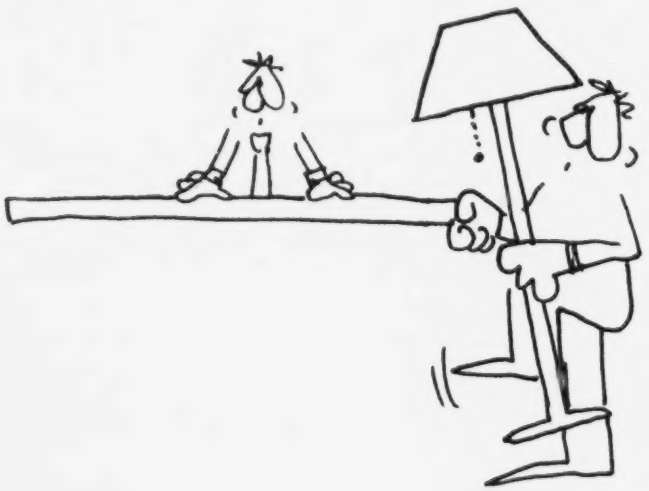
5. THE RIGHT TO REDRESS / THE RESPONSIBILITY TO COMPLAIN

For the Teacher

The Right to Redress
The right to redress implies the availability of grievance procedures through which consumers can receive satisfaction and fair compensation for just claims - injuries or losses which may have resulted from consumer-dealer transactions, misrepresentation, shoddy goods or unsatisfactory services.

The Responsibility to Complain
Each of us has the responsibility to inform businesses and other consumers in a fair and honest manner of our dissatisfaction and satisfaction with products and services. Through this process, business and manufacturers receive valuable information about the quality and effectiveness of their product or service and are able to make required improvements or changes to better satisfy consumer needs.





ACTIVITY #1

HOW BUSINESSES SOLVE CONSUMER PROBLEMS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Explain what the consumer right to redress means (the right to relief or correction of a problem or complaint).
2. Identify redress methods provided to consumers by local businesses.
3. Relate the importance of redress between consumers and business to effective marketplace operations.

Teacher Preparation:

Ensure that students have access to community businesses and businesspeople.

Duplicate a class set of the handout "Interview Know How".

Time:

One-half class period for introduction. One hour out-of-class time for interviews. One class period for follow-up.

Procedure:

Discuss with students what consumer redress means.

Have students identify a variety of businesses in the community which supply goods or services. Have students work in pairs and make arrangements to interview the manager of a business of their choice in pairs. Give each pair a copy of the "Interview Know How" handout.

Have students brainstorm a list of interview questions relating to the ways that businesses handle consumer complaints and problems. Once interviews are completed, have students provide oral reports. Chart on the board the different types of redress procedures found in the community. You may discover a continuum:

No redress procedures "Tough on consumer"	Individual problem solving between manager and customer	Store policies in place for handling complaints (e.g. refunds and exchange policy	Customer Service counter	Customer Service department

Evaluation:

Assess Objective #1 by considering the discussion about what redress means. Is it clear from students' comments that they understand this concept? Students' reports and the continuum of redress procedures can be used to assess Objective #2. Objective #3 relates to students' attitudes. Assess it by listening to the comments that students make. Do they appreciate the importance of redress in creating effective marketplace relations?

STUDENT HANDOUT:

INTERVIEW KNOW HOW

To accompany Activity #1, "How Businesses Solve Consumer Problems in Your Community".

Before the Interview

- Contact your potential interview subject in person or by telephone. Explain the purpose of the interview and tell the person how long the interview will take. If the person agrees to be interviewed, set a date, time and place.
- Prepare a list of questions to ask. Use questions that will get the person talking. Questions that begin with "who? what? when?" are good; so is the request that begins "tell me about ..." Avoid questions that can be answered with "yes" or "no".
- Decide how the information will be recorded. Will you take notes or will you use a tape recorder?
- If more than one person is going to the interview, decide who will do what. Will one person ask questions and the other take notes or will you take turns doing both tasks?

During the Interview

- Keep questions short and ask them one at a time.
- Keep the interview subject on the topic. If he or she starts talking about something that is not related to the topic of the interview, ask another question or ask him or her to explain something said earlier.
- If you don't know the person that you are well interviewing, begin the interview with a few minutes of friendly conversation. The weather and sports are always good opening topics.
- Use smiles and nods to keep the person talking - saying uh-huh too often becomes distracting.
- Ask for explanations or descriptions, if necessary. If something isn't clear or if you don't understand something be sure to ask for clarification.
- Thank the person at the end of the interview.

After the Interview

- Write the person a short note thanking him or her for the interview. In the note, explain again what the information collected during the interview will be used for.
- Do something with the information collected. Use it as the basis for a chart, a report, a play or a class presentation.

ACTIVITY #2

THE GENTLE ART OF THE CONSUMER COMPLAINT

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Make an assertive consumer complaint.

Teacher Preparation:

Duplicate class sets of the handouts "The Gentle Art of the Consumer Complaint", and "Hold It! - Before You Complain"

Time:

One class period.

Procedure:

Ask students to give a few examples of times when they or their parents purchased goods or services which proved to be unsatisfactory. Some possible examples might be a scratched compact disc, a perm that went straight two weeks later, a jacket that fell apart the first time it was cleaned, or a car repair that didn't correct the problem.

Tell students that in this activity they will have an opportunity to practice the consumer complaint so that they will be able to handle similar situations if they should arise in the future.

Divide students into pairs. Tell each pair to select a consumer problem. It can be one that they have experienced personally or one from the examples listed at the beginning of the class.

Distribute the handout "Hold It! - Before You Complain" and have students complete it to be sure their complaint is valid. If it is not valid, ask students to select another complaint. Distribute the handout "The Gentle Art of the Consumer Complaint" and ask students to role-play the process of making a complaint.

One member of the pair acts as a merchant and the other plays the role of complaining customer. The complainer should remember to be polite, assertive and persistent, never rude or abusive. After a few minutes, the partners can trade roles so that both have an opportunity to practice making a consumer complaint.

Discuss with students why it is important that they complain - for the consumer and for business.

Evaluation:

Observe students' role-plays. Was the complainer polite, assertive and persistent? Complainers who lose their temper, whine or stalk away in disgust haven't met the objective of this activity.

Additional Activities:

Have students write a letter of complaint. The handout "Sample Letter of Complaint" can be used as an example.

STUDENT HANDOUT:

THE GENTLE ART OF THE CONSUMER COMPLAINT

To accompany Activity #2, "The Gentle Art of the Consumer Complaint"

So, you know your consumer rights and responsibilities and you have been acting on them. But, in spite of your best efforts, you have problems with a purchase. Don't give up. Your next step is to exercise the "gentle art of the tough complaint." Speak up - complain to the business about your problem.

The Responsible Consumer's Complaint Formula

What to do first:

1. **Collect all the paper information you have**, such as sales slips, warranty card, cancelled cheque and claims check.
2. **Take the item to the store**, if possible.
3. **Return to the store as soon as possible** after discovering the problem.
4. Go to the person who sold you the item, if a salesperson is involved. If it was purchased at a checkout, go the department manager or customer service counter.
5. **Ask the person if she/he has the authority to help you** solve the problem. If she/he can't help you, find out who can and go to him/her. It is annoying to explain the situation, then be referred to someone else and have to explain it all over again.
6. **Explain the problem.**
   Include:
   - the date of the purchase,
   - the date of failure or problem,
   - what happened to the article, and
   - what you did to try to correct the problem.
7. **Explain what you would like done about your complaint.**
   - Be reasonable and fair.
   - Be positive but firm.
   - Keep your temper and sense of humour.
8. **Listen carefully** to the answers you get from the seller. You may not have a valid complaint as far as the store is concerned.

   If the store will resolve the problem to your satisfaction, great. You're finished.

   If the store won't and you think it has more responsibility, then carry on to the next steps.

What to do next

9. If you cannot get satisfaction from the seller, **complain to the manufacturer.** (If service is involved, complain to a business or professional association).

10. **Be sure to keep a record of the names of the people you have contacted**, the dates of the meetings, what was said and the results, if any.

11. If you cannot get satisfaction from the seller or manufacturer, **contact your provincial government department or agency responsible for Consumer Affairs.** They will advise you of your rights and responsibilities and will try to resolve the problem through mediation.

12. You may also wish to contact the **Better Business Bureau.**

13. You may wish to check if your complaint can be heard in **Small Claims Court.** Check the provincial government listings for information on Small Claims Court in your area.

It takes time, persistence and a lot of patience to resolve some problems. **Sometimes, the greatest lesson learned is to be more careful the next time.**

STUDENT HANDOUT:

HOLD IT! - BEFORE YOU COMPLAIN

To accompany Activity #2, "The Gentle Art of the Consumer Complaint"

You agree that complaining is important and you're ready to go! One moment please. Before you complain, ask yourself the following questions. The will help you assess whether or not your complaint is valid.

1. Did you gather the information about the product before purchasing it to make sure that the product would serve your purpose? Yes ☐ No ☐

2. Did you fully explain to the store people what you wanted the product for? Yes ☐ No ☐

3. Did you use the product only for the purpose described? Yes ☐ No ☐

4. Did you examine the quality of the product before you purchased it? Yes ☐ No ☐

5. Did you follow the instructions for assembly, use and care for the product? Yes ☐ No ☐

6. Are you unhappy with the product because it is a different size/colour than what you ordered? Yes ☐ No ☐

7. Are you unhappy with the product because some parts are missing? Yes ☐ No ☐

8. Are you unhappy with the product because it was delivered to you damaged or broken or because it didn't last very long? Yes ☐ No ☐

9. Are you unhappy with the product because it does not match the description or sample? Yes ☐ No ☐

10. Are you unhappy with the product because you changed your mind about the colour/size/model you wanted? Yes ☐ No ☐

Answers:
You have a valid complaint if you answered:
"Yes" to questions 1 through 5
"Yes" to one of questions 6 through 9, and
"No" to question 10

You do not have a valid complaint if you answered:
"Yes" to question 10

It is your responsibility to determine your needs and buy accordingly. Businesses are under no obligation to refund, return or exchange goods for you.

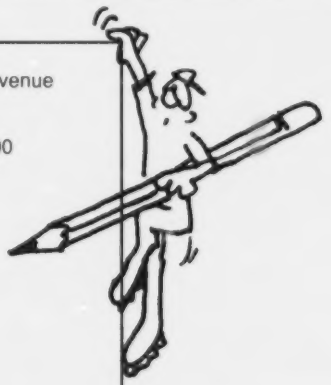
STUDENT HANDOUT:

SAMPLE LETTER OF COMPLAINT

To accompany Activity #2, "The Gentle Art of the Consumer Complaint"

Sample Complaint Letter

Type your letter, keep it short, keep a copy



1234 Hillcrest Avenue
City, Province
Postal Code
October 20, 1990

REGISTERED MAIL

Ms. Mabel MacKay
Customer Relations Manager
Glad Rags Clothing Manufacturing
1555 - 78 Street
City, Province
Postal Code

Dear Ms. MacKay:

Identify the date and location of the purchase

Give a complete description of the goods or service

On August 17, 1990, I purchased a Glad Rags brand, cotton knit long sleeved sweater, style number 6049 from the Trendy Fashion Centre in this city. Information on the garment labels indicates that the sweater is "oyster and fuschia" in colour and made of 100% cotton. Cleaning instructions state that it can be washed by hand in lukewarm water and laid flat to dry.

In spite of carefully following the washing instructions, the dye in the sweater ran leaving pink splotches over the entire garment.

Explain the problem

Outline the action you've taken

I attempted to return the sweater to the Trendy Fashion Centre where I bought it. Although they said they have had several complaints, they were not willing to exchange the sweater or refund my money.

Specify the action you expect and reasonable time period

I am now writing to you to request that you exchange my sweater for a new one. If this cannot be done, I request that you arrange for a refund through the Trendy Fashion Centre. Please reply within ten working days of this letter. I can be reached at the above address or during business hours at 765-4321.

Provide a daytime phone number

Enclose copies of documents (keep the originals)

I have enclosed a copy of my sales receipt.

Yours truly,

Joan Johnson

Identify yourself

Encl.

ACTIVITY #3

THE CUSTOMER IS NOT ALWAYS RIGHT

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Determine whether the complaint is reasonable and legitimate.
2. Identify procedures businesses can, and are, taking to deal with consumer suggestions and complaints more effectively.

Time:

One-half class period for introduction. One-half hour for out-of-class research. One-half class period for follow-up.

Procedure:

Point out to students that complaints are not always valid - the customer is not always right. Have students identify some situations in which customers' complaints may not be valid.

Explain that, by law, stores can set their own policies. Some may limit or restrict exchanges or refunds in some way. There may be a contract accompanying a sale or service that specifies areas or situations for which the seller is not liable. Warranties may not be as all-encompassing as a consumer believes.

Brainstorm for a list of procedures a company or business may take when a customer expresses dissatisfaction with a product or service and asks for compensation or an exchange or refund. For each of these, note how this reaction could harm or help the business.

Inform students that a number of studies have confirmed that ignoring customer complaints and not being aware of customer dissatisfaction can hurt a business. As a result, many businesses are going out of their way to encourage consumers to express concerns and have taken specific measures to ensure complaints will be handled efficiently and fairly.

Divide the class into groups to research the information in the three projects that follow; allow a few days for completion and then discuss the results.

Group A

Consumers often find that a complaint they thought they had was not valid. Policies regarding exchanges and refunds are set by individual stores. Get information about these policies by:

- canvassing a number of stores in your area to identify differences in policies regarding refunds and exchanges
- noting how the customer is informed of the policy

Group B

A growing number of big businesses are taking measures to ensure consumers will express their concerns and to handle complaints quickly and to the customers' satisfaction.

Such measures include:

- evaluation or suggestion cards - as in hotels, restaurants
- providing toll-free numbers to register complaints
- providing booths where customers can videotape their message
- establishing complaint departments with personnel trained in resolving problems effectively
- liberal refund policies
- giving a quick and full response and an explanation if the request can't be granted
- avoiding promises that can't be kept

Contact some of the larger industries, businesses and stores in your area to determine and evaluate:

- the efforts made to encourage customer complaints
- the existence of complaint departments, trained personnel
- policies that could be considered generous in terms of keeping the customer happy

Group C
Identify some businesses and companies that have toll-free numbers for information and complaints. Think of legitimate questions, complaints, words of praise you might have for some of them. Phone in to express these and evaluate the response in terms of whether it would promote customer satisfaction and loyalty, or discourage it.

Note: If the response was negative, students might consider notifying the company of the reason for your call and noting the possible effects of the negative response.

Using the results obtained, have student evaluate the effectiveness of a variety of procedures taken by companies and stores to handle consumer complaints. Suggest changes for those that were not effective. Develop a list of rules for consumers that would encourage their action in seeking redress, and prevent their finding themselves in situations with limited redress.

Evaluation:

At the beginning of the activity, students discussed situations in which consumers' complaints may not be valid. Use the comments made during this discussion to assess whether Objective #1 has been attained. Use the results of students' research to assess Objective #2. Have students accurately identified a range of strategies that businesses are using to deal with consumer suggestions and complaints?

Additional Activities:

1. Some variations of this activity that are suitable for small communities include:
   - Ask the manager of a local retail store to speak to the class and describe some legitimate customer complaints and also some ways in which customers try to take advantage of merchants and businesspeople.
   - Have students think of as many outrageous customer complaints as they can. Then have them develop a series of humorous skits dramatizing these outrageous complaints.
2. In addition to the major activity described above or instead of it, have students put themselves into the shoes of a store manager and develop a policy for handling customer complaints. Have students work in groups. Each group should:
   - identify a particular type of business
   - identify the kinds of complaints that people in that business might experience from their customers
   - decide which complaints are legitimate and which are not
   - decide how both types of complaints will be handled (e.g. money refunded, item exchanged, consumer given a credit, nothing done, etc.)
   - put all decisions made into a formal written policy.

ACTIVITY #4

SOLVING CONSUMER PROBLEMS

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Use the knowledge and skills obtained in this chapter to solve hypothetical consumer problems involving dissatisfaction with goods or services.

Time:

One class period.

Procedures:

Conduct a class activity that simulates a television talk show with some students acting as a panel of experts representing personnel from government, business agencies and community organizations that assist consumers seeking redress.

Have the panel respond to a variety of consumer questions and problems "phoned in" by other class members.

Ask some students to act as recorders and evaluators, checking the answers that the panel gives to the questions that are "phoned in".

Evaluation:

Assess both the experts and the evaluators on the correctness and feasibility of the advice given to consumers who "phone in" during the talk show. Marks might also be assigned for the calibre of the "questions" submitted to the panel.

6. THE RIGHT TO CONSUMER EDUCATION / THE RESPONSIBILITY TO BE A COMPETENT AND ETHICAL CONSUMER

For the Teacher

The Right to Consumer Education

Consumers have the right to be provided with consumer education - the knowledge and skills required to function effectively in the marketplace. They need to know how to critically analyze, make good decisions, understand and act on their marketplace rights and responsibilities, manage personal and economic resources and participate constructively as consumer citizens, influencing the factors which shape the marketplace.

Some reasons why consumer education is important include:

- Almost 50% of high school students have jobs and are earning and spending significant amounts of money.
- High school students and young adults in Canada have $3.5 billion disposable income a year to spend largely on personal needs and wants.
- Technological changes are occurring at a fast pace, including electronic banking, electronic grocery shopping, TV shopping and telephone sales.
- Each year, the market is bombarded with new products. There are 1,500 new items a year in the grocery industry alone.
- Advertising has become an integral part of our society and uses highly sophisticated techniques to convince us that we "need" a vast array of products and services.
- Consumer indebtedness is increasing drastically in Canada. The average Canadian adult spends 20% of net income on debt financing (excluding mortgages).
- Not all sellers in the marketplace are honest. Some unscrupulous people do try to take advantage of consumers.

The Responsibility to be a Competent and Ethical Consumer

We all have a responsibility to behave in a fair and ethical manner by not engaging in dishonest practices, by seeking out knowledge and updating our skills, by making informed and ecologically sound choices, and by effectively communicating our needs and expectations to business and government.

ACTIVITY #1

CONSUMER EDUCATION - WHAT IS IT AND WHY DO WE NEED IT?

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Organize consumer education concepts in a way that shows the relationships between concepts.
2. List reasons why consumer education is important for everyone.

Teacher Preparation:

Duplicate the handouts "Consumer Education - Basic Concepts" and "Consumer Education Additional Concepts". (One of each for each group of three or four students.)

Time:

One class period.

Procedure:

This activity is a variation of concept mapping. Concept mapping is a teaching strategy that helps students understand the relationships between concepts in a topic or subject area.

Begin the lesson by explaining to students that consumer education is education which gives people the knowledge and skills they need to function effectively in the marketplace. Ask students to give a few oral examples of how consumer education can help you in your everyday life. Then tell students that this activity will give them an opportunity to identify all of the material which might be covered in a consumer education course.

Divide students into groups of three or four. Distribute the handout "Consumer Education - Basic Concepts". Give students a few minutes to discuss the concepts in their groups. If some students don't understand particular concepts, others in their group can provide the necessary explanations.

Next distribute the handout "Consumer Education - Additional Concepts". This handout provides a number of boxed concepts. Have students cut out the concepts. Then ask them to discuss each concept and to arrange the concepts in a logical order on the basic conceptual structure provided on the handout "Consumer Education - Basic Concepts". Students will probably sort and reorganize the concepts several times before achieving a pattern that they consider satisfactory. If students wish they can draw vertical or horizontal arrows on their concept map to show that concepts are related to each other in several ways.

It is important to note that for this activity there is no right or wrong way to arrange the concepts. Different groups of students will see different relationships between them. A chart of these concepts appears in the introduction to Project Real World. Don't expect students to reproduce this chart. The purpose of this activity is to promote discussion and understanding of the concepts related to consumer education not to reproduce someone else's organizing structure.

Finally, ask each group to prepare a written list of why consumer education is important for everyone.

Evaluation:

To assess Objective #1 consider the way in which students organized the concepts. Students should be able to give logical reasons for why they organized the concepts in the way they did. For Objective #2 examine students' written lists of reasons why consumer education is important. Do students recognize that consumer education helps people make good decisions, financial decisions, influence the marketplace and behave responsibly as consumers?

Additional Activities:

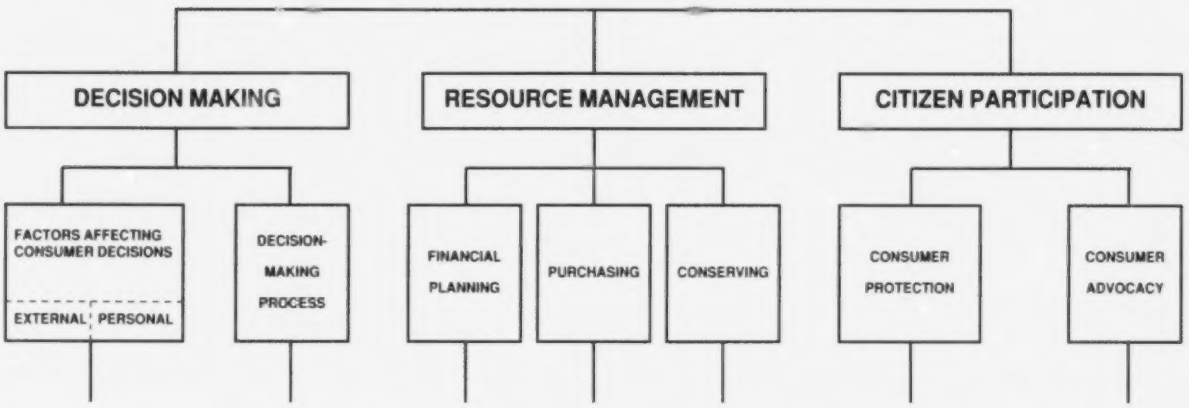
Have students select a consumer education concept from one of the handouts and develop a plan for teaching it to someone else. If time permits, groups of students might teach their concepts to younger students.

STUDENT HANDOUT:

CONSUMER EDUCATION - BASIC CONCEPTS

To accompany Activity #1, "Consumer Education - What is It and Why Do We Need It?"

Below are some basic concepts in consumer education. Discuss them with your classmates and be sure that you understand each one.



Source: Charles Monsma and Rosella Bannister. *Classification of Concepts in Consumer Education*. South-Western Publishing, 1982. Used with permission.

STUDENT HANDOUT:

CONSUMER EDUCATION - ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

To accompany Activity #1, "Consumer Education - What is It and Why Do We Need It?"

Below are some additional concepts in consumer education. Discuss each one with your classmates to be sure you understand it. Then organize the concepts in a logical manner under the headings provided on the handout "Consumer Education - Basic Concepts". You may need to reorganize the concepts several times before you are satisfied.

RESOURCES	LIFECYCLE	VALUES AND GOALS	TECHNOLOGICAL INFLUENCE	POLITICAL SYSTEM	SOCIAL SYSTEMS
ECONOMIC SYSTEM	SHOPPING DECISIONS	NEEDS AND WANTS	INFORMATION	PROTECTING	GOODS
TAXPAYING	SPENDING	CONSEQUENCES	CONSUMER ASSERTIVENESS	ECOLOGICAL ISSUES	ALTERNATIVES
SERVICES	NEEDS AND WANTS	DECISION-ACTION	LIFESTYLE	PROBLEM-SOLVING	BORROWING
EVALUATION	EFFICIENT USE	OBTAINING	CONSUMER REPRESENTATION	INVESTING	DIMINISHING RESOURCES
CONSUMER RESPONSIBILITY	CONSUMER ORGANIZATION	RESOURCE SUBSTITUTION	CONSUMER LAWS	CONSUMER ASSISTANCE	CONSUMER RIGHTS

Source: Charles Monsma and Rosella Bannister. *Classification of Concepts in Consumer Education*. South-Western Publishing. 1982. Used with permission.

ACTIVITY #2

AM I AN ETHICAL CONSUMER?

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Assess their own principles and reactions regarding unethical marketplace practices.
2. Identify the effects of unethical consumer behaviour in the marketplace.

Teacher Preparation:

Duplicate a class set of the handout "My Consumer Ethics Quiz".

Time:

One class period.

Procedure:

Have students complete the quiz in the handout.

Lead a discussion about ethical consumer behaviour and the impact of unethical behaviour. For example:
- Stolen merchandise results in a 10% increase in costs of products and services to consumers.
- Over 50% of shoplifting is done by teenage girls.
- Shoplifting carries criminal penalties including fines, jail sentences and a police record.
- Consumers should obtain receipts as proof of their purchases.

Have students break into discussion groups and discuss:
- What are the reasons for shoplifting? What happens if you get caught?
- What are the legal consequences?
- How are all consumers affected when others are unethical?
- What can businesses do to reduce unethical consumer behaviour?
- What can you do when you see someone littering, stealing, being rowdy or disruptive in a public place?

Evaluation:

Student self-evaluation.

Additional Activities:

1. Invite a lawyer or judge to speak to the class about the legal penalties for shoplifting.
2. Invite a security officer from a large store to speak to the class about the way that they handle incidents of shoplifting.

STUDENT HANDOUT:

"MY CONSUMER ETHICS" QUIZ

To accompany Activity #2, "Am I an Ethical Consumer?"

Read the following questions and circle honestly the answers which best describe your behaviour or views. Answers will not be shared or seen by anyone else.

1. You're in a store and see the tape you've been looking for. You'd like it for the weekend but have spent all your money. No one appears to be looking. Would you take it?

Yes	Maybe (If I thought I wouldn't get caught.)	No/Never

2. You're out shopping with two friends at the mall. You stop for a coke after trying on clothes and one of your friends pulls out a T-shirt which she/he hasn't paid for. What do you say/do?

"That's cool."	"That's stealing."	Decide not to shop with him/her again.

3. You buy a small stereo and you drop it on the way home. Do you return it to the store and say it was defective when purchased?

Yes	Maybe (If it's a large store that can take the loss.)	No/Never

4. Grad is coming and you can't really afford the dress/suit that you want to wear. Do you buy the dress/suit planning to return it after the dance saying it's wrong for you?

Yes	Maybe	No/Never

5. You stop for some take-out burgers and chips while driving around Friday night with your friends. Once all the food is eaten, do you throw the paper wrappers, plates, cups and bag out the window?

Yes	Sometimes	Never

6. You go shopping with a friend. S/he switches the price tag on a shirt before taking it to the checkout. What do you think?

"That's cool."	"That's dishonest."	"I'm not shopping with him/her anymore."

7. You're out with a group of friends at a restaurant. One of your group is being loud and making rude comments. You see this is disturbing other diners. What do you do?

Join in the rowdy behaviour.	Ignore the behaviour but smile apologetically at the other diners.	Ask your friend to "put a lid on it."

8. You get a hair cut from a barber/salon that "guarantees satisfaction or your hair cut free." You like the cut but decide to go for a freebie and tell them you're not satisfied.

Yes, I'd try it.	Maybe try it if I'm broke and need a haircut.	Never. It's not fair.

9. You "borrow" $10 from your friend and don't repay immediately. S/he never mentions it so you decide not to bother repaying at all.

Sure. Why pay if she/he's forgotten? They don't need it.	Sometimes, if I'm really broke and don't care about the friendship.	Never. I want my friends to trust and respect me.

10. You're paying for a cassette at the checkout counter and the clerk gives you an extra $2 change by mistake. Do you tell him/her of the mistake?

Yes, always.	Sometimes, if I think the clerk will have to pay.	Never. His/her mistake is money in my pocket.

ACTIVITY #3

ETHICS: FROM A BUSINESS POINT OF VIEW

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Outline the importance of consumer ethics from a business point of view.
2. Realize the cost to businesses (and consequently to consumers) of unethical practises on the part of some consumers.
3. Explain why consumers and business may hold varying views about what is responsible consumer behaviour.

Teacher Preparation:

Prior to the class, invite (or have a student invite) a businessperson to speak to the class.

Time:

One class period.

Procedure:

Invite a business person from the community to come into class and discuss what he or she considers to be responsible consumer behaviour on the part of consumers, and also what he/she considers to be unethical behaviour. Ask the speaker to also identify the cost to the business of unethical consumer behaviour.

Be sure that the speaker points out that the costs of theft, vandalism, etc. are eventually passed along to consumers. Have students discuss the subject before the speaker arrives, drawing on the thinking they have done in Activities #1 and #2, and have them prepare some class questions.

After the speaker has left ask students to work individually to write short essays. In the essay each student should identify why consumer ethics are important to business people, what the costs of unethical consumer practices are to businesses (and ultimately consumers), and summarize ethical and unethical consumer behaviour.

Evaluation:

The essays that students write after the guest speakers' presentation include three sections. Each of these sections corresponds to an objective. Analyze the students' essays in order to assess the extent to which the three objectives have been met.

Additional Activities:

Have students divide into five work groups. Ask each group to consider and discuss the following situation.

Case Study:
A mother of three small children is a single parent and unemployed. It's close to the end of the month and she has no money and no food. She goes to the grocery store and takes some hot dogs and apples without being seen.

Discuss:
Is the woman's behaviour ethical, unethical? Responsible? What would you do?

7. THE RIGHT TO A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT / THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT AND RESPECT THE ENVIRONMENT

For the Teacher

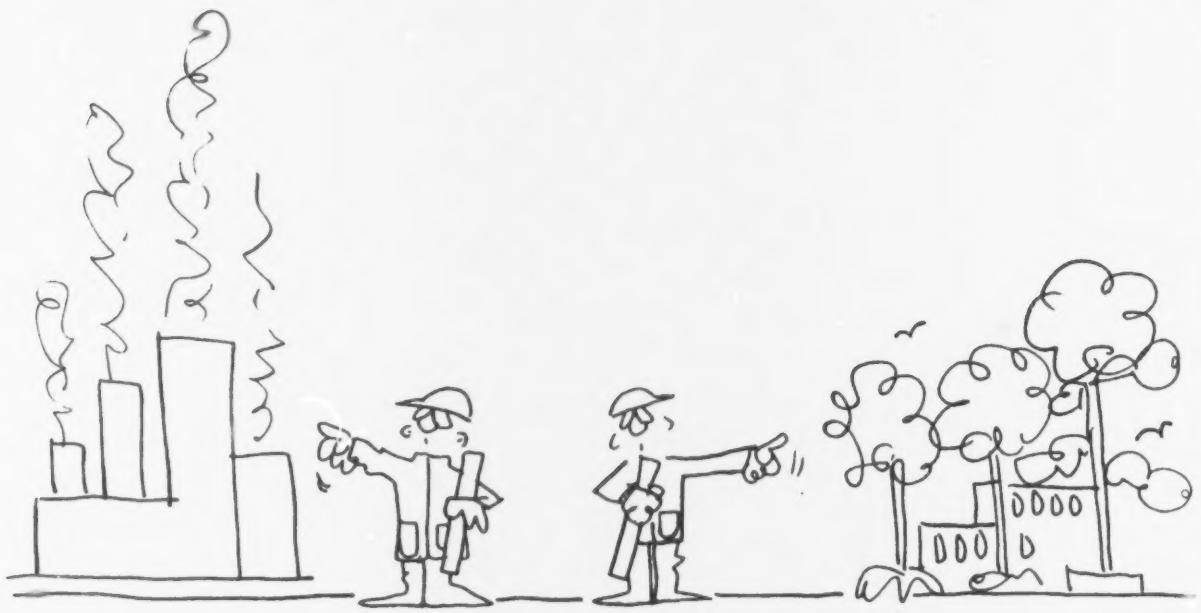
The Right to a Healthy Environment
The right to a healthy environment includes the need to protect it against dangers and improve the environment for both present and future generations.

The Responsibility to Respect the Environment
Each of us have the responsibility to carefully consider the impact our consumer decisions and actions have on the environment. It is the responsibility of all to respect the environment, thinking about the effects on the physical environment of our consumer decisions and actions.

While government and business agencies face the enormous task of dealing with such problems as oil spills, transportation of toxic substances, disposal of nuclear waste, every consumer citizen has a responsibility to adopt practices that will assist in protecting our increasingly fragile environment.

Students need to be aware of their own practises and behaviors as well as the products and services that contribute to pollution and threaten the environment. They need information that will guide them in evaluating products reputed to be environment-friendly. They need encouragement and the ability to let businesses and manufacturers know of their preferences and concerns.

Related Content: Module II, Your Economic Decisions; Chapter C, Choose to Conserve.



ACTIVITY #1

ARE YOUR CONSUMER HABITS ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY?

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Assess their individual consumer habits in light of environmental considerations.
2. Identify any personal consumer behaviour which is harmful to the environment.
3. Identify alternative behaviours which demonstrate concern for the environment.

Teacher Preparation:

Duplicate a class set of the handout "Are Your Consumer Habits Environmentally Friendly?" Quiz

Time:

One-half class period.

Procedure:

Remind students that through our personal consumer habits we have the ability to significantly harm or help the environment. How many resources we use, how we use them and how we dispose of them can reflect environmental concern or be wasteful and harmful, ignoring the protection of the environment. Examples:
- buying overpackaged products (personal hygiene, make-up, food);
- supporting fast food outlets that use only disposable dishes/packaging without requesting a change;
- taking 20 minute hot showers.

Have students work individually and fill out the quiz "Are Your Habits Environmentally Friendly?". Discuss other ways that we might be wasteful in our daily consuming habits and how we might conserve and protect the environment.

Real aloud the score descriptions below.

Student Score
Every A = 3 points
Every B = 0 points
Every C = 2 points

Score of 0 to 18:
Your habits suggest that you have a way to go to protect the environment. If you are concerned about the environment, you will have to make some significant lifestyle changes. Think about joining an environmental group to go more information about what you can do. Ask your school librarian to recommend some readings on the subject.

Score of 19 to 36
You have taken some important first steps. Now is the time to practise what you believe. Your fuller commitment is needed for a truly environmentally friendly lifestyle. What additional changes can you challenge yourself to undertake?

Score higher than 36
You are a dedicated environmentalist. Why not share your values and consumer environmental skills with others? Organize a school environmental group or project. Your knowledge is valuable and should be spread among others.

Evaluation:

Student self-evaluation.

STUDENT HANDOUT:

ARE YOUR CONSUMER HABITS ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY? QUIZ

To accompany Activity #1, "Are Your Consumer Habit Environmentally Friendly?

This quiz will help you take a look at your present consumer habits and help you identify changes you may want to make.

1. I try to be aware of the effects my actions have on the environment, and to minimize destructive practices.
   _____ a) Yes
   _____ b) No
   _____ c) Sometimes
2. I take my own bags to the grocery store in which to carry my groceries home.
   _____ a) Yes
   _____ b) No
   _____ c) Sometimes
3. I avoid buying items with too much (wasteful) packaging whenever possible.
   _____ a) Yes
   _____ b) No
   _____ c) Sometimes
4. I travel to work:
   _____ a) On foot or by bicycle
   _____ b) Alone in my car
   _____ c) By public transit or carpool
5. When buying beverages I choose:
   _____ a) Drinks in reusable bottles
   _____ b) Drinks in recyclable cans
   _____ c) Drinks in disposable containers
6. During coffee break I:
   _____ a) Use my own mug all the time
   _____ b) Use disposable cups all the time
   _____ c) Sometimes use disposable cups

7. Vegetable peelings and scraps in my house go:
   _____ a) Into the compost
   _____ b) Into the garbage can
   _____ b) To feed the animals

8. I use electric toothbrushes, can openers, knives, etc.
   _____ a) Never
   _____ b) Often
   _____ c) Occasionally

9. I am careful to turn taps of tightly and ensure that there are no drips or leaks.
   _____ a) Always
   _____ b) Never
   _____ c) Sometimes

10. I reuse paper bags and plastic and glass containers:
   _____ a) Always
   _____ b) Never
   _____ c) Sometimes

11. I use the blank sides of printed or used paper for scratch pads, for children's art, etc.:
   _____ a) Always
   _____ b) Never
   _____ c) When I think of it

12. When clothes get worn out our outgrown, I:
   _____ a) Mend what can be repaired and/or send to the local thrift store
   _____ b) Throw in the garbage
   _____ c) Mend some, throw some out

13. When shopping for clothing, I:
   _____ a) Choose styles and fabrics that will last
   _____ b) Choose the latest fashions that will probably go out of style next year
   _____ c) Sometimes give in to impulse and buy fashions or fabrics I know
   _____ won't last

14. At Christmas and for birthdays, etc., I:
   _____ a) Find alternatives to wrapping paper
   _____ b) Purchase new wrapping paper every year
   _____ c) Recycle used wrapping paper, but buy new when I have to

15. I try to use non-toxic cleaning products in my home.
   _____ a) Always
   _____ b) Sometimes
   _____ c) Good idea, I'll try

Adapted from: *How's Your Environmental Awareness? Save It Kit*, Environment Canada. Used with permission.

ACTIVITY #2

STUDENT ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Appreciate the responsibility of every citizen to take actions that will help preserve the environment by making a personal commitment and encouraging others to do so.
2. Share their concerns about environmental problems and the knowledge and ideas they have gained with other students, their families and the public.

Time:

Two class periods.

Procedure:

Have students organize an environmental event such as:
- a seminar, workshop or mini-conference, with class members or invited community environmentalists acting as the resource people;
- an "environment day" with display tables of information and distribution of an information bulletin or fact sheet;
- a daily announcement on the school P.A. system describing ways to protect the environment.

Encourage students to be creative when they are delivering their environmental message.

Encourage students to make a personal commitment by doing one or more of the following:
- lobby government, industry, or business regarding a personal environmental concern;
- join or give some support to an environmental action group;
- make changes in lifestyle or personal habits that would promote a more environmentally safe environment.

Evaluation:

If the format chosen for the public information is some form of display, evaluation can be done by other teachers or classmates or the public through an evaluation sheet. Evaluation of personal knowledge and commitment can be determined by having students repeat the quiz "Are Your Consumer Habits Environmentally Friendly?" which is part of the previous section.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Introduction

In order to ensure adequate consumer protection in Canada, we have a division of legislative power between the federal and provincial governments. The federal government has different powers over the marketplace than do the provincial governments, even though both jurisdictions enact and administer consumer protection laws.

Major federal consumer laws have to do with competition, advertising, hazardous products, quality control and packaging and labelling.

Most provinces administer a variety of separate statutes governing specific industries, such as motor dealers, collection agents and auctioneers. It is important to note that these laws apply only to **retail businesses.** They do **not** apply to private sales. For example, they apply if you buy a new car from an auto dealer but not if you buy a second-hand car from your neighbour.

In addition to enacting consumer protection legislation, governments have also set up agencies to assist consumers. Many of the provincial governments have a Department of Consumer Affairs, for example.

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to make students aware that there is both federal and provincial legislation to protect consumers and agencies whose purpose is to provide assistance to consumers.

Scope

This chapter on Consumer Protection covers two topics. They are:

1. Consumer Protection Laws
2. Consumer Assistance

1. CONSUMER PROTECTION LAWS

For the Teacher

Upholding the law has changed somewhat since frontier days when the fastest gun dictated the terms, and arguments were solved by a shoot-out at high noon.

Today, consumer laws, both federal and provincial, help protect consumers in the marketplace. The federal laws deal with topics such as advertising, labelling, hazardous products and safety, and weights and measures.

Some federal laws include:

Food and Drugs Act
- prescribes any sale of an article of food that (a) has in it or upon it any harmful or poisonous substance; (b) is intended for human consumption; (c) consists in whole or part of any filthy, putrid, disgusting, rotten, decomposed, or diseased animal or vegetable substance; (d) is adulterated; or (e) was manufactured, prepared, preserved, packaged or stored under unsanitary conditions.

Hazardous Products Act
- prohibits the sale of an identified group of very dangerous products and regulates the advertising, packaging and labelling of other products which have the potential to cause injury.

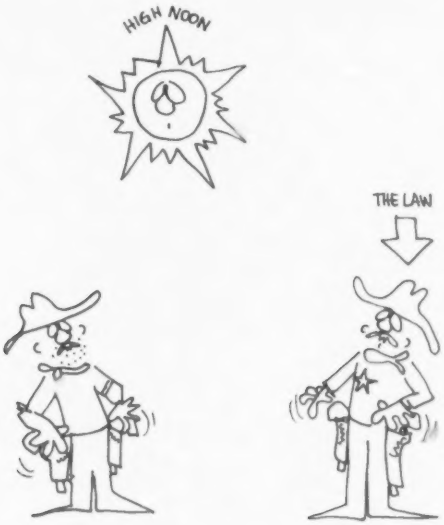
Motor Vehicle Safety Act
- provides for the establishment of safety standards for motor vehicle and vehicle parts, and for notice to consumers when unsafe parts or other defects are discovered through use or testing.

Canadian Environmental Protection Act
- controls all aspects of the life cycle of toxic substances from their development, manufacture or importation, transport, distribution, storage and use, their release into the environment, co-emissions at various stages of their life cycle, and their ultimate disposal as waste, has authority to regulate fuels and components of fuels; has authority to regulate emissions and effluents, as well as handling and disposal practices of federal departments, boards, agencies and Crown corporations.

Competition Act
- regulates against misleading advertising and against price fixing.

Weights and Measures Act
- sets a standard system so you can compare goods and services.

Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act
- ensures descriptive information on labels.



Textile Labelling Act
• provides for information about the fibre content of fabrics used in clothing and furniture.

If you would like information concerning any of these acts, contact an office of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Canada closest to you.

Provincial laws vary from province to province and focus on ensuring fair play between buyers and sellers, and providing redress for consumers in marketplace transactions. Examples include legislation which governs the rights of consumers in dealing with direct sellers, motor dealers and when entering into credit agreements.

Contact your provincial government department responsible for consumer and commercial matters for a description of the consumer protection legislation in your province.

Some provincial consumer legislation includes:

British Columbia
- **The Consumer Protection Act**
- **The Trade Practice Act**
- **The Sale of Goods Act**

Alberta
- **The Unfair Trade Practices Act**
- **The Consumer Credit Transaction Act**
- **The Licensing of Trades & Business Act**

Saskatchewan
- **The Direct Sellers Act**
- **The Consumer Products Warranties Act**
- **The Cost of Credit Disclosure Act**

Manitoba
- **The Consumer Protection Act**
- **The Trade Practices Inquiry Act**
- **The Sales of Goods Act**

Ontario
- **The Consumer Protection Act**
- **The Business Practices Act**
- **The Sale of Goods Act**

Quebec
- **The Pharmacy Professional Advertising Regulation**
- **The Consumer Protection Act**
- **The Act Respecting Publicity Contests and Lotteries**
- **The Roadside Advertising Act**

New Brunswick
- **The Cost of Credit Disclosure Act**
- **The Direct Sellers Act**
- **The Consumer Product Warranty & Liability Act**
- **The Unfair Business Practices Act**
- **The Highway Advertisements Regulations**
- **The Sale of Goods Act**

Nova Scotia
- **The Consumer Protection Act**
- **The Consumer Reporting Act**
- **The Consumer Creditors Conduct Act**

Prince Edward Island
- **The Consumer Protection Act**
- **The Business Practices Act**
- **The Consumer Reporting Act**
- **The Direct Sellers Act**
- **The Highway Advertisements Act**
- **The Sale of Goods Act**

Newfoundland & Labrador
- **The Consumer Protection Act**
- **The Direct Sellers Act**
- **The Sale of Goods Act**
- **The Exhibition of Advertisements (billboards) Act**
- **The Trade Practices Act**
- **The An Act to Impose a Tax on the Sale of Advertising**

Related Content: Module I, The Canadian Marketplace and You; Chapter B, The Consumer and the Economy; Topic 1, Economic Systems.

ACTIVITY #1

GATHERING INFORMATION

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Assemble a quantity of information on consumer legislation and on government agencies which assist consumers.

Time:

Do this activity about four to six weeks before work on the Chapter "Consumer Protection" begins. The actual activity will take one-quarter to one-half class period.

Procedure:

This activity is intended to collect information that students will need to successfully complete the other activities in the Chapter "Consumer Protection". In this chapter students learn about consumer protection laws and about government agencies which assist consumers. Some of this information may not be readily available in the school library, therefore, students will need to gather it before work on this chapter actually begins.

For Information About	Write to
• provincial consumer laws	provincial department of consumer affairs (Name varies from one province to another). Look in blue pages of telephone book for address.
• ways in which provincial department of consumer affairs helps consumers	as above
• federal consumer laws	Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada Place du Portage Ottawa-Hull Ontario K1A 0C9
• ways in which the federal department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs helps consumers	as above

Evaluation:

Have students collected a supply of articles, pamphlets and brochures giving information on federal and provincial consumer protection laws and government agencies which protect consumers?

ACTIVITY #2

CONSUMER PROTECTION LAW

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Identify federal and provincial laws that protect consumers.
2. Identify the consumer protection which each of these laws is intended to give.
3. Indicate how each of these laws helps consumers and business.

Teacher Preparation:

Duplicate a class set of the handout "Getting to Know Consumer Law" Use the master provided to make the Transparency, "Why Consumer Laws?"

Time:

One-half class period.

Procedure:

Explain to students that there are four types of consumer laws. Display the Transparency, "Why Consumer Laws?".

1. Laws that protect consumers from physical harm from a product.
2. Laws which protect consumers from fraud.
3. Laws which protect the consumer from poor quality merchandise.
4. Laws which require accuracy of information.

Provide students with the handout "Getting to Know Consumer Law" and have them use the information they collected in the previous activity to complete the chart.

Evaluation:

The three columns on the worksheet "Getting to Know Consumer Law" correspond to the three objectives for this activity. Examine the worksheets in order to determine the extent to which the objectives have been met.

Additional Activities:

Break students into groups of five to discuss ways in which they have personally benefited from these consumer protection laws.

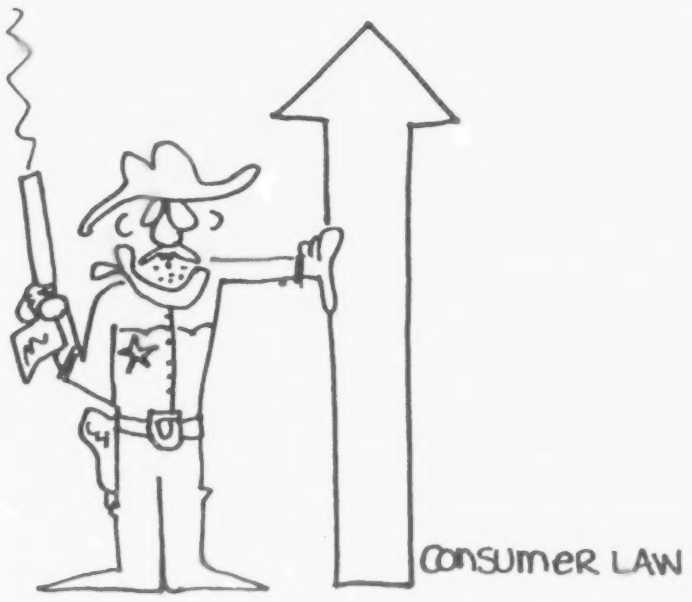
STUDENT HANDOUT:

GETTING TO KNOW CONSUMER LAW

To accompany Activity #2, "Consumer Protection Law"

Complete the chart by listing some federal and provincial consumer laws, what they're intended to and how they benefit consumers and business.

Type of Consumer Law	Name of the Act	Federal or Provincial	Consumer Protection It's Intended to Give	How Can It Help Consumers	How Can It Help Businesses
Laws which protect consumers from physical harm from a product					
Laws which protect consumers from fraud					
Laws which protect the consumer from poor quality merchandise					
Laws which require accuracy of information					



Developed by Connecticut Cooperative Extension Service, Hugo H. John, Director, in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 14, 1914. The University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT, 06268. Used with permission.

TRANSPARENCY
WHY CONSUMER LAWS?

To accompany Activity #2, "Consumer Protection Law"

WHY CONSUMER LAWS?

Consumer Laws:

- Protect consumers from physical harm from a product.
- Protect consumers from fraud.
- Protect the consumer from poor quality merchandise.
- Require accuracy of information

ACTIVITY #

LIFE WITHOUT CONSUMER PROTECTION AND CONSUMER LAW

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Decide how life would be different for a typical student if there were no consumer protection laws.
2. Describe instances where they personally have been protected by consumer laws.

Teacher Preparation:

Duplicate a class set of the handout "Consumer Law Protects You".

Time:

One class period.

Procedure:

This activity has two parts.

Part I

Break students into groups of two to four. Distribute the handout "Consumer Law Protects You". The first section of the handout describes a typical student's day and indicates instances where the student is protected by consumer law. The second section describes specific laws which apply in each of the instances noted.

After students have read the description of the typical day, have them rewrite the story as if there wre no consumer protection laws. For example, at the beginning of the day, the alarm clock may not ring and the student is late for school.

Part II

Ask students to work individually. Each student should identify instances where he or she has been personally protected by consumer law. Some of the personal experiences may be similar to those described in the handout. You may want to set a time limit on this activity - perhaps five or ten minutes.

Evaluation:

Part I of the activity correlates with Objective #1. Do students realize that life would be less predictable and perhaps even unsafe without consumer law?

Part II of the activity correlates with Objective #2. Can each student identify a few instances where s/he was protected by consumer law?

Additional Activities:

Life without consumer protection laws would have its comical side - alarm clocks would fail to ring, clothes would rip at embarrassing times, etc. Have students develop a skit which illustrates all of these comical possibilities.

STUDENT HANDOUT:

CONSUMER LAW PROTECTS YOU

To accompany Activity #3, "Life Without Consumer Protection and Consumer Law"

You will find various phrases underlined in this handout. Each of these phrases represents an instance where you are protected by consumer law. For each underlined phrase identify the consumer protection law. When you have identified each law, rewrite the story as though there were no consumer protection laws. What would be the result?

You are woken promptly at 7:45 a.m. by the music of **your faithful alarm clock**. You arise from your bed, stumble to the bathroom and shower using your favourite **shampoo and conditioner**. Feeling much refreshed, you apply gel, **plug in your hair dryer** and style your hair. As a final step before you leave the bathroom, you brush your teeth with your **favourite toothpaste**. You are looking great!

As you go to get dressed, you realize that your jeans and shirt are in the **dryer**. You run down and put them on. They **look great and fit perfectly as usual**.

It's breakfast time. Your **bacon, eggs, milk, juice and cereal are fresh and tasty**.

Your little brother calls out from his **crib,** you give him a **rattle** and he is content again.

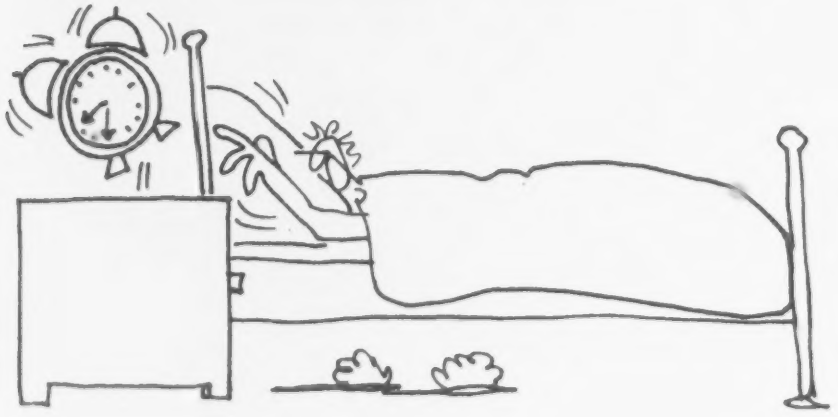
While you're making your lunch you wrap up sandwiches, grab an apple and **check the cookie package** to be sure they don't contain any coconut. You have a dreadful allergy to coconut.

While you are at school, you see the janitor **wearing rubber gloves while using a powerful corrosive cleaner** in the washroom.

On the way home from school, you pick up **1 litre of milk, 100 grams of sandwich meat and 4 litres of ice cream** for your parents.

Finally you get home and settle down to watch TV. **There are many commercials** along with the regular TV programs. **One commercial appears to be misleading**. You sit down and write a letter to your local TV station, the Advertising Standards Council, the manufacturer and Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

In the midst of writing your letter you are interrupted by a magazine salesperson. You invite the salesperson into your living room **after checking her license**. The magazines look very interesting and the monthly installments very reasonable. You sign the **contract** on the dotted line. Later that evening you realize that once you pay the monthly payment for your magazines you won't have enough money to do the things you want. You sit down at your desk and **write another letter, this time to the magazine sales company to cancel your contract**. You make a note to send it by registered mail tomorrow.



How Consumer Law Protects You

Your faithful alarm clock
- meets standards set by the **Canada Standards Association,** an independent, private testing firm. Products tested and approved by the CSA bear their "stamp of approval"

Shampoo and Conditioner
- You are able to identify the difference because the products are clearly labelled according the **Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act.**

Dryer
- Meets electrical standards set by the CSA for operation and, therefore, it has not caught on fire.
- Bears an **Energuide** label which tells you how much energy the dryer uses in kWh/month.

Clothes look great and fit perfectly
- You are able to find clothes that fit consistently because Consumer and Corporate Affairs has a **Canada Standard Size** program. This is a voluntary program whereby manufacturers agree to adhere to a set of guidelines for sizing clothes. Clothes which have been sized according to Canada Standard Sizing will carry the CS label.
- Your clothes have not shrunk or faded because you were able to follow the care instructions on the label (This is also a voluntary program, not required by law).
- You know what your clothes are made of and where they were made because they are labelled according to the **Textile Labelling Act.**

Bacon, eggs, milk, juice and cereal
- Your bacon and eggs have been health inspected and graded for quality by **Agriculture Canada.**
- Your milk is in a 1 litre container. The size of the contained is governed by Consumer and Corporate Affairs **Weights and Measures Act** so you know you are getting what you paid for.
- You are able to tell from the label on your juice that it does not contain added sugar because the ingredients must be listed in decreasing order according to the **Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act.**
- You are able to choose the most nutritious cereal because the ingredients and nutrients must be listed on the package according to the **Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act.**

Crib and rattle
- Cribs and rattles must meet strict requirements under the **Hazardous Products Act.** Unsafe cribs, rattles and other baby products have been responsible for infant deaths. It is always important to ensure that products purchased for babies adhere to the requirements of the Act.

Check the cookie package
- Ingredients must be listed on packages in descending order of their presence according to the **Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act.**

Janitor wearing rubber gloves while using a powerful corrosive cleaner
- Under the **Hazardous Products Act,** household cleaners must be labelled in the mandatory **Hazardous Products Safety Coding** which has adopted the octagonal traffic sign for "stop" meaning "danger"; the diamond shape for "warning"; the upside-down triangle for "caution". These are combined with the death head for "poison"; the bursting bomb for "explosive"; the flame for "inflammable" and the skeletal hand for "corrosive".

One litre of milk, 100 grams of sandwich meat and 4 litres of ice cream
- The **Weights and Measures Act and Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act** requires that container size be correct. (If the package says 4 litres of ice cream, there must be 4 litres). Inspectors from Consumer and Corporate Affairs periodically inspect scales to ensure that they are set correctly.

There are many commercials

- Misleading advertising is covered by the **Competition Act** and the **Food and Drugs Act.**
- The **Advertising Standards Council** is an industry self-regulation body which has implemented the **Canadian Code of Advertising Standards.** The Code covers the following subjects: false or misleading advertising; price claims; guarantees; advertising to children; and bait and switch advertising.

One commercial is particularly offensive to you

- According to the **Competition Act** and the **Food and Drugs Act,** the Misleading Advertising Division of the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs is responsible for investigating misleading advertising complaints and prosecuting firms if necessary. Your complaint to Consumer and Corporate Affairs may or may not lead to prosecution. There are specific criteria for judging an ad to be misleading. If you write to the TV station, the Advertising Standards Council and the manufacturer you may have influence in having the ad changed or removed from broadcast. Advertising is intended to sell, not to offend. Manufacturers, advertisers and TV stations are usually sensitive to consumer demand.

After checking her license

- **Provincial Direct Sellers** legislation requires that direct sellers be licensed. (Note: Most provinces have legislation which controls direct sales but it may have different names in different provinces.

Write another letter to the magazine sales company

- **Provincial Direct Sellers** legislation requires that there be a "cooling off" period for all direct sales. The length of the "cooling off" period varies from one province to another. Usually cancellations must be made in writing and sent by registered mail.

ACTIVITY #4

PROVINCIAL CONSUMER LEGISLATION

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Identify and describe several pieces of provincial consumer protection legislation.
2. Provide other students in class with the new information they have gained.

Teacher Preparation:

Duplicate a class set of the handout "The Jigsaw Technique".

Time:

One - two class periods.

Procedure:

Divide the class into four groups. Have each group choose one piece of consumer protection legislation, and apply the "Jigsaw Technique" as described in the handout. In their research students will address:
- the date the legislation was enacted
- general description of the legislation
- examples of where the legislation can be applied.

Students should use the information collected earlier during Activity #1, or they can use reference books in the school library.

Evaluation:

Encourage students to evaluate their own success at researching information and communicating it to others. After a student has told his/her HOME group what s/he learned in the research group, that student should ask one or two fellow students to repeat the information back to her/him. If the information repeated back is accurate and complete, the student did a good job researching the information and explaining it to others.

STUDENT HANDOUT:

JIGSAW TECHNIQUE

To accompany Activity #4, "Provincial Consumer Law"

When a large amount of information needs to be accessed and used by students in a class, the JIGSAW technique allows this to be done efficiently and more quickly.

Students are divided into groups of three to five students, depending upon how many categories of information must be researched. These are called the HOME groups. Students within the home groups are assigned a letter - "A", "B", "C", "D", "E".

Students then move to their RESEARCH groups - all the A's together, B's together, and so on. This group gathers together all the information required of them, organizes it into a convenient format and discusses the information they have compiled, to ensure each member thoroughly understands it.

Students reform into their HOME groups, and each member, in turn, teaches the other members what s/he has learned.

ACTIVITY #5

SMALL CLAIMS COURT

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Explain when there is a need for legal assistance.
2. Identify sources of legal assistance and explain the function of each.
3. Outline the general procedures in taking a complaint to Small Claims Court and note the kinds of judgements handed down.

Time:

In-class activity - 40 minutes, out-of-class research - 20 to 60 minutes.

Procedure:

Review with students the sources of action a consumer can take when seeking redress for unsatisfactory goods or services. Note that although it can be the first action taken, legal redress is often the final resource when all else fails. Ask students to identify some situation in which legal redress might be appropriate. Legal redress can take the form of filing a complaint through Small Claims Court or hiring a lawyer and going through a regular court of law.

Ask students to share what they know about either process. What they know may be based on what they see on television, and this may not always simulate real life. Explain that the success rate for claims going through Small Claims Court is quite high, but many consumers lack the knowledge and self-confidence to use this resource.

Divide students into two groups. Have the first group determine the following for Small Claims Court:
- the costs involved in your province
- what kinds of cases go through this court
- the procedure
- preparation which should be made by the claimant
- the kinds of judgments that are made.

In most provinces, Small Claims Court is part of the provincial court system administered by the department of justice. (The name of this department may vary from one province to another.) Students can find the appropriate addresses in the blue pages of the telephone book.

Information about Small Claims Court can be gathered through interviews, by letter or on the telephone.

If possible, visit a Small Claims Court and record what occurs.

When costs and/or compensation being sought by the consumer exceeds the limit allowed through the Small Claims Court, legal aid may be necessary.

Have the second group determine the following:
- the existence in your community of such services as: community law clinics, legal aid, lawyer referral services
- who is eligible to use these
- the function and service of each
- the process for seeking redress through a regular court of law
- the kinds of cases which are usually handled this way
- the kinds of judgments which are handed down.

When all material has been gathered and shared, have students draw up a two column chart showing the major differences between making a claim through Small Claims Court and a regular court of law. Note when each would be the best course of action.

Evaluation:

Assess Objective #1 by considering the comments that students make near the beginning of the activity when they are identifying situations in which legal redress might be appropriate. Assess Objective #2 by evaluating the information that students gather about sources of legal assistance in your community. Is the information accurate and complete? Objective #3 can be assessed by considering the information that students gather about Small Claims Court. Do they understand the purpose of this court and the procedures used?

Additional Activities:

1. Students can role-play a Small Claims Court in action, judging a variety of complaints.
2. In small communities it may not be possible to visit a Small Claims Court. Some alternate activities include:
   - Invite a local lawyer or a community member who has filed a complaint through Small Claims Court to speak to the class.
   - Write to the government department responsible for Small Claims Court (this varies from province to province) and ask for information about the court.

2. CONSUMER ASSISTANCE

For the Teacher

In response to the growing complexity of Canadian marketplace and the increasing demands of consumers for assistance in functioning effectively and problem-solving in the marketplace, a range of government, community, business agencies and organizations have been established.

Government agencies which provide consumer assistance include departments of consumer affairs at the Federal and Provincial levels, whose primary focus is the needs of consumers.

The exact names of those departments varies from one province to another. Look in the blue pages of the telephone book for the exact name and local address.

Other departments of government, such as agriculture, commerce and health are concerned as well with consumers.

Most provinces, through the department of Justice or the Attorney General, have special courts in which consumers can resolve minor marketplace problems. The proceeds are purposefully informal and inexpensive to allow for easy consumer access. The parties involved usually represent themselves and do not use the services of a lawyer.

Community Assistance
Valuable consumer support is often provided by local, provincial and national community groups and voluntary associations. Often groups form around single consumer issues such as conservation and limiting consumer waste. The **Consumers' Association of Canada** (CAC) has branches throughout the country and plays a leadership role in helping consumers solve problems and make their concerns known to government and industry. Write to the:

Consumers' Association of Canada
P. O. Box 9300
Ottawa, ON K1G 3T9

National Agencies
In Canada, there are a number of agencies (sometimes partially funded by the government) which address a specific area of concern to consumers. For example:
- The Canadian Standards Association
- Standards Council of Canada
- Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC)
- Canadian Toy Testing Council
- Food Marketing Boards
- Canadian Safety Council
- Canadian Automobile Protection Association
- Public Legal Education Association (PLEA)

See the Appendix for the addresses of those organizations.

Business Assistance
In some provinces and communities, businesses co-operate to provide consumer assistance through the establishment of a **Better Business Bureau.** Businesses pay membership fees to support the bureau and consumers can check the reputation of member companies. As well, the B.B.B. will attempt to mediate a dispute between consumers and business members.

Professional associations for business and industry sectors also provide assistance to consumers. For example:
- Canadian Bankers' Association
- Canadian Direct Mail Marketing Association
- The Canadian Soft Drink Association
- Canadian Manufacturers' Association

ACTIVITY #1

WHO HELPS CONSUMERS?

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Identify the government, business and community agencies/organizations in their province which provide assistance to consumers.
2. Differentiate between the various agencies (understanding their funding sources, alliances and focus) and services they provide to consumers.

Teacher Preparation:

Ensure that students have access to the local telephone book, business directory and community resources.

Time:

One class period, two hours research.

Procedure:

Explain to students that there are government and business organizations available to offer advice, mediate on behalf of the consumer, or even solve the problem.

Have students break into groups and identify all the agencies and organizations in their community/province which provide assistance to consumers. Identify the kinds of consumer problems and complaints dealt with, the kind of assistance given (advice, problem-solving, mediation, etc.), any costs involved, and advantages and disadvantages of using the agency/organization.

When the list is complete, have students each select one or two agencies to visit, write or phone. They should request information on the agency's purpose, funding sources, alliances and services to consumers.

Have each team chart on a poster or the board the agencies they have discovered. Brief presentations can be made on key agencies.

Evaluation:

Base the evaluation of both objectives on the results of students' research. Have students identified a number of organizations that assist consumers? Have they studied one or two of these in depth, providing detailed information about the organization's purpose and scope?

Additional Activities:

1. Invite a speaker from a community agency which provides assistance to consumers to address the class on the role and services of the agency.
2. During National Consumer Week (third week in April) have students develop a consumer display illustrating common problems consumers face and describing where they can go for help.

ACTIVITY #2

GETTING HELP FOR YOUR PROBLEM

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Identify and approach the appropriate agency or organization to get help in solving a marketplace problem.
2. Make use of all the consumer assistance available to them in solving a problem.

Teacher Preparation:

Ensure that students have access to community resources.

Time:

One class period, two hours other.

Procedure:

Remind students that it is their responsibility as consumers to advise merchants of a problem – complain. If the business does not agree to resolve the problem, it is their right to take it to a consumer group or government agency.

Have students identify a problem they, a friend or a member of their family have experienced in the marketplace recently. What did they do?

Have each student select a problem and follow through (on paper), beginning with the complaint and ending with contacting the appropriate agency. Examples of problems:

1. A new permanent looses its curl within a week. The business won't give you any compensation.
2. The colour comes off a new leather jacket, leaving obvious white patches. The store refuses to take it back.
3. Shortly after a car is repaired, it breaks down with the same problem. The garage doesn't take any responsibility and offers to fix it again at the full price.

Have students prepare reports on the steps they take.

Evaluation:

Evaluate this activity by considering the steps that students have taken to correct their consumer problem. Did they first contact the business and then (if necessary) involve consumer protection groups?

MAKING YOURSELF HEARD: THE CONSUMER CITIZEN

Introduction

As consumers we play a major role in Canada's market-based economy. The items we buy (or don't buy) send strong messages to manufacturers and retailers. But consumers affect the marketplace in more direct ways as well. We can complain about products and services that are unsatisfactory and give praise for those that are. We can tell government about laws that need changing or new laws that are needed.

Some consumers act individually to do these things. Others join consumer groups, recognizing that there is strength in numbers. Today consumer groups are a powerful influence on both the marketplace and the government. They lobby the government on issues which affect consumers, publish consumer magazines and provide representatives to serve on government boards and commission.

Purpose

This chapter is intended to make students aware of ways in which they can influence the marketplace and Canadian consumer education.

Scope

This chapter on making yourself heard covers three topics. They are:

1. Consumer Assertiveness
2. Consumer Representation and Organization
3. Choices and Challenges

1. CONSUMER ASSERTIVENESS

For the Teacher

Some conflict is inevitable in everyday life. People disagree about things. They accidentally or purposefully infringe on other people's rights. In the marketplace, conflicts arise between consumers and business over customer satisfaction. Resolution of these conflicts is made easier if those involved practice assertive behaviour. A consumers' ability to complain effectively requires assertive behaviour.

Assertive behaviour is the ability to express yourself honestly without denying the rights of others. People who are assertive state what they think and feel, but they do not criticize, attack or make fun of others. Nor do they apologize for their beliefs or run away from a conflict situation.

There are three other types of behaviour which are possible in conflict situations: **passive, aggressive,** and **passive-aggressive.** A person who is passive runs away from the situation (either literally or figuratively). A person who is aggressive attacks others and may get into a verbal or physical fight. A person who is passive-aggressive may retreat in the face of a conflict but may then make her feelings known through indirect means such as complaining, sulking or sarcasm.

Assertive behaviour is particularly useful when making a consumer complaint. If a piece of merchandise is defective or if a service is unsatisfactory, letting the merchant know in an assertive, polite and firm manner often works wonders. Avoid becoming angry or abusive toward the merchant. Persistence is often important in making a consumer complaint. Sometimes it takes several visits to the store and occasionally it is necessary to go to the manufacturer or to an appropriate business or professional association, but ultimately politeness and persistence often pay off.

Related Content

Module I, The Canadian Marketplace and You; Chapter B, The Consumer and the Economy; Topic 5, Choices and Challenges.

Module I, The Canadian Marketplace; Chapter C, Political and Social Systems Influence the Marketplace; Topic 1, Government: Public Policy, Regulations, Interest Groups.

ACTIVITY #1

THE NEW ASSERTIVE YOU

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Identify whether their own behaviour is assertive, passive, aggressive, or passive-aggressive.
2. Understand and practice assertive behaviour.

Teacher Preparation:

Duplicate class sets of the handouts "The New Assertive You", and "Assertive Behaviour for Students".

Time:

One-quarter class period.

Procedure:

Distribute the handout, "The New Assertive You" and give students four or five minutes to complete the quiz. After students have completed the quiz but before they have analyzed their answers, explain the difference between passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive, and assertive ways of dealing with conflict. Then tell students that on the quiz "A" answers are passive, "B" answers are aggressive, "C" passive-aggressive, and "D" assertive.

Evaluation:

Because this is a rather personal exercise, student self-evaluation is best. Simply ask students what their answers tell them about their own behaviour.

Additional Activities:

Distribute the handout "Assertive Behaviour for Students". Divide students into groups of three, each with a consumer problem to be solved. One student is the consumer, another is the business person and the third is an observer. Have them rotate the roles, each trying to use assertive behaviour in resolving the consumer complaint. The observer will describe how each person behaved so that the person being described can assess whether his/her behaviour was assertive.

STUDENT HANDOUT:

THE NEW ASSERTIVE YOU

To accompany Activity #1, "The New Assertive You"

Do you often feel hesitant to claim your rights, anxious about your feelings, unable to handle anger, or frustrated by helplessness? If so, you may have trouble being assertive when the situation calls for it. Your answers to the following questions can indicate how assertive you are:

1. Your boss at the Burger Quick-Stop tells you not to expect a raise this year. You've worked hard, been dependable, and believe you deserve a raise. You:
   a) Let the matter drop, telling yourself that you "probably aren't worth a raise anyway."
   b) Tell your boss what you think of him, his job, and Quick-Stop burgers. You quit on the spot.
   c) Say nothing, but complain to your co-workers and go out of your way to make mistakes.
   d) Tell your boss that you've worked hard and been dependable, and would like to discuss a reasonable increase in your pay.

2. You save your wages for six months, and are finally able to buy the stereo system you've been wanting. It works for several days, then the speakers begin cutting in and out. You:
   a) Start saving for another system to replace it.
   b) Take the stereo back where you bought it, yell at the salesperson, and tell him the store had better fix it "or else".
   c) Put up with the malfunction, but continue to feel angry and tell others not to patronize the store where you bought the stereo.
   d) Return the stereo with the warranty and ask to see the manager. Calmly explain the problem, and then ask for a refund or a replacement.

3. Your brother embarrasses you in front of your friends by making a snide remark about the grades on your last report card. You:
   a) Cry and hide in your room.
   b) Hit him.
   c) Laugh, then later let the air out of his bike tires.
   d) Take him aside and tell him your grades are your concern and you would appreciate his not discussing your personal business in front of others.

4. A friend at a party urges you to try an illegal drug. You:
   a) Try the drug, even though you don't want to.
   b) Call your friend a "stupid loser" and engage in a loud shouting match.
   c) Say, "Gee, I'd like to, but I have to go home soon and I don't dare show up high".
   d) Say "No" firmly, with no excuses or apologies.

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STUDENT HANDOUT:

ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOUR FOR STUDENTS

To accompany Activity #1, "The New Assertive You"

Assertive behaviour is not aggressive. Behaving assertively does not mean trying to get the better of someone else, but rather expressing yourself in a way that will convince the other party that what you are saying is truthful and honestly expresses how you feel. In assertive behaviour, it is important to know when a position cannot be settled and to have the self-confidence to give in.

Rules for assertive behaviour include the following:

1. Keep your cool. Rather than antagonizing the other party with abusive remarks, the assertive approach attempts to enlist his/her aid in solving the problem.
2. Make eye contact and stand straight.
3. Don't ramble on and on. Decide ahead of time what you want to say and say it clearly in no more than two or three sentences.
4. Negotiate from strength. Recount what has happened, what you have already done and what you expect to happen now.
5. Predict possible responses and prepare to answer them.
6. Have your facts straight and know what your rights are.
7. Don't talk to anyone who hasn't the authority to correct the problem. Presume the other party will want to rectify the problem.
8. Be prepared to escalate - announce your next course of action.
9. Put your complaint in writing and make a note of all conversations and their outcomes.
10. If the problem is not resolved, move to the next step - go to a higher authority, write a letter of complaint, contact the appropriate agency.

ACTIVITY #2

PRACTISING CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Distinguish between assertive, passive, aggressive, and passive-aggressive behaviour.
2. Practise assertive behaviour.

Teacher Preparation:

Duplicate a class set of the handout "Conflict Resolution Case Studies".

Time:

One class period.

Procedure:

Distribute the handout, "Conflict Resolution Case Studies". This handout describes a number of conflict situations, then divides the students into groups of four or five and tells students to role-play assertive, passive, aggressive, and passive-aggressive responses in each situation. Students should take turns being participants and observers and should discuss how the different types of responses to each situation might be structured.

Evaluation:

Observe the groups. Do students accurately present the four different types of behaviour?

STUDENT HANDOUT:

CONFLICT RESOLUTION CASE STUDIES

To accompany Activity #2, "Practising Conflict Resolution"

In small groups, role-play the following situations. For each situation present assertive, passive, aggressive, and passive-aggressive behaviour.

Case Study #1
When driving your Mom's car, you drive too close to the garbage can stand and scratch the paint on one side of the car.

Case Study #2
You plan to meet a friend for a meal at 6:00 pm at Houston Pizza. You wait until 6:30 and your friend doesn't show up, so you go home and eat leftovers out of the fridge. At 7:00, your friend phones wanting to know why you aren't at the restaurant and explaining that she is just a little bit late.

Case Study #3
You buy a new shirt at the store. When you get it home you discover that there's a stain on the back of the collar.

Case Study #4
You borrow a friend's new compact disc and accidentally crack the case.

Case Study #5
You work part-time at a small clothing store. One day business is slow so you rearrange the accessories display near the front of the store. The boss comes in, takes one look at the display and starts screaming at you.

ACTIVITY #3

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Recognize the important role that communication plays in making our needs, wants and preferences known in everyday life.

Time:

10 minutes in-class time for preparation, 3 hours out-of-class time. One-half class period for follow-up.

Procedure:

1. Tell students that the activity they are about to do is intended to illustrate how essential communication is to everyday life. Tell students to pick a three hour time period some time during the next couple of days. The time period must be during the day or early evening. It cannot be during the night. During this time period students are not allowed to speak to anyone, write any notes or to read anything.

   Next day in class, have students discuss how they got along during their period of non-communication. Some volunteers may be willing to come to the front of the class and mime how they made their needs and wants known when they were denied several methods of communication. Ask the class whether it was possible to communicate ideas, concepts or other abstract topics with such restricted means of communication.

Evaluation:

Do students realize that life would be much more difficult without the ability to communicate with others?

Additional Activities:

Most communication requires the use of some physical ability: sight, speech, hearing, ability to move the fingers, etc. Have students investigate various systems of communication which have been developed for people who are physically or sensorially disabled. For example, Braille and talking books for those who are visually impaired; American Sign Language for those who are hearing impaired and various types of symbol boards and computer systems for those who are physically disabled.

ACTIVITY #4

HANDLING STRESS

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Identify sources of stress in their own lives.
2. Develop a plan to deal constructively with the sources of stress in their own lives.

Time:

One class period.

Procedure:

Begin the lesson by emphasizing that not all stress is harmful. A manageable level of stress keeps people from getting bored and makes life interested and challenging. Tell students that sources of stress can be internal, external, or a combination of both and give some examples. Then have students work in small groups for 10 minutes or so. Each group should identify some common sources of stress for high school students and some ways of coping with stress. Next, call the groups together and have a spokesperson for each group report the stress-management techniques identified by that group. Lastly, have students work individually. Tell each student to identify the major sources of stress in her/his life and to develop a plan for either eliminating the source of the stress or, where this isn't possible, coping with the stress.

Let students decide whether or not to show you their work, as this is an intensely personal exercise.

Evaluation:

Student self-evaluation.

2. CONSUMER REPRESENTATION AND ORGANIZATION

For the Teacher

Consumer Representation

This module emphasizes the importance of the consumer in shaping the marketplace. Individual consumers have an influence on the marketplace by their decisions about what to purchase and by speaking out when they're dissatisfied. The interests of consumers as a group need to be represented with governments and industry when decisions about such things as economic policy, marketplace regulations or product standards are being made.

How do governments and business know what consumers want and need? They listen to consumer representatives through a number of channels. These channels include:

- letters
- petitions
- briefs and position papers
- representation at public hearings
- representation on advisory committees
- representation on boards and regulatory commissions

Public Hearings

Governments often hold public meetings so that government officials and politicians can get opinions and ideas from the public. It is every citizen's right to attend a public hearing to observe, or to present opinions and ideas. Public hearings are always advertised in the community media. One example is the Free Trade Hearings held across Canada in 1988-1989.

Advisory Committees

Governments and businesses often establish committees made up of various segments/sectors of the public to provide ideas and a consumer perspective regarding programs, services and products.

Boards and Commissions

Boards and commissions are established by government to oversee marketplace issues. They may administer a program (at arms length from government) or solicit public opinion and ideas. Public utilities review boards are an example in many provinces. Where and when they exist, their purpose is to review utility prices and consult the public on possible increases.

Consumer Organization - The Consumer Movement

The first national consumers' movement was born during the Second World War when The **Consumer Group of the Wartime Prices and Trade Board** (WPTB) recruited women's groups across the country to assist in monitoring prices and rationing. Responsible for keeping the cost of living under control during the war years, these Women's Regional Advisory Committees became a source of information and guidance for Canadian homeowners on all consumer matters.

Concerned with the skyrocketing increases in prices after the war's end, women's groups and the government decided to continue the work of these committees by establishing a permanent peacetime consumer's group. In 1947 The **Canadian Association of Consumers** (now called the **Consumers' Association of Canada**) was established.

Its list of accomplishments on behalf of consumers has been outstanding and it remains the largest and best-known consumer group in Canada.

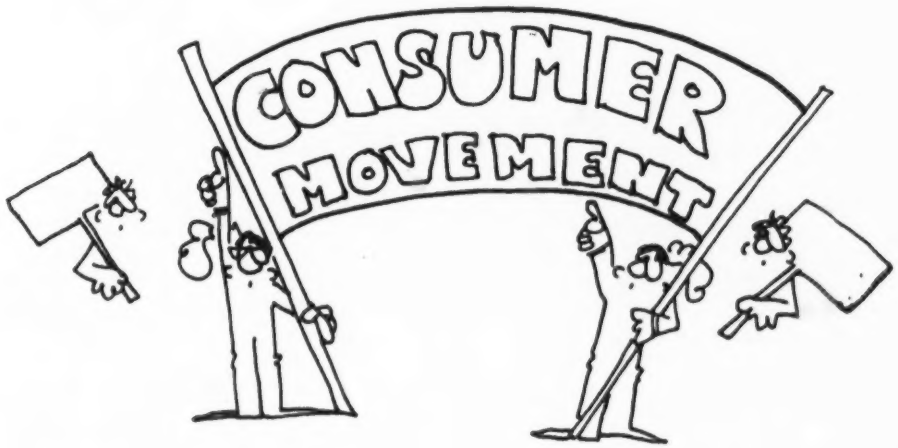
Since the Consumers' Association of Canada, other consumer groups have been established. Two other well-known consumer groups are the **Automobile Protection Association** and the **National Anti-Poverty Association.**

More recently, in response to changes in society and the marketplace, the number of smaller, single-issue action groups has increased. Examples include those which form around issues such as store hours, quality of drinking water or public transportation. Every consumer who wants to can belong to a consumer group.

Related Content:

Module I, The Canadian Marketplace and You; Chapter B, The Consumer and the Economy; Topic 5, Choices and Challenges.

Module I, The Canadian Marketplace; Chapter C, Political and Social Systems Influence the Marketplace; Topic 1, Government: Public Policy, Regulations, Interest Groups.



ACTIVITY #1

RESEARCHING THE CANADIAN CONSUMER MOVEMENT

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Describe the social, economic, technological and environmental changes which contributed to the need for consumer advocacy, consumer interest groups and the consumer movement.
2. Outline the history of Canada's consumer movement.
3. Describe and understand the objectives, activities and major achievements of one consumer group.

Time:

10 to 15 minutes of class time; one or two hours out-of-class time.

Procedure:

Provide students with an outline of the Consumer Movement as provided in the "For the Teacher" section.

Divide students into groups, each to research one of the following organizations.

1. Research the objectives, activities and achievements of the Consumers' Association of Canada (CAC) by reporting on:
   - why it was established
   - history of the consumer group, highlighting major changes in its forty-odd years
   - how it is run or organized; membership
   - method of funding
   - ongoing activities
   - major achievements over the years and current concerns
   - scope of activity - regional, national, international
   - methods used to influence government and business decisions
2. Conduct a survey of one or more of the local single-issue action groups, noting:
   - the length of time the group has been operating
   - it's mandate
   - how it is funded and supported
   - membership information, use of volunteers
   - past achievements and present programs
   - methods used to influence or make concerns known

   Students may want to write to these organizations, interview local representatives or do library research in order to collect information. Have students summarize their research findings into a fact sheet and share it with the class.

Evaluation:

Do students' fact sheets cover the requirements of the three objectives? Is the information specified by the objectives accurate and complete?

ACTIVITY #2

WANT TO JOIN A CONSUMER GROUP?

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Identify consumer groups in their community/area/province.
2. List the advantages and disadvantages of belonging to a consumer group.

Teacher Preparation:

Have phone books, community directories and consumer magazines available.

Time:

One class period.

Procedure:

Have students list as many consumer groups in their province or community as possible. These may include the Consumers' Association of Canada as well as environmental groups, and in some instances, groups concerned with safety. Students can refer to phone books, community directories and consumer magazines when they are preparing their lists.

Invite a representative from a consumer group to speak to the class, outlining the objectives of the group, its activities and membership requirements.

Have students discuss whether or not they would want to belong to such a group. Have them identify advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages might include:
- becoming more informed about consumer issues
- being able to speak out on consumer issues

Disadvantages might include:
- participation in any organization takes time

If possible, students may wish to attend a meeting of the group to gain a first-hand understanding.

If there isn't a local representative from a consumer group available, write to the nearest contact for the information and continue discussions as outlined.

Evaluation:

To assess whether Objective #1 has been achieved look at students' lists of provincial and community consumer groups. Is it comprehensive? To assess Objective #2 look at students' lists of advantages and disadvantages. Have they been able to identify at least one advantage and one disadvantage?

Additional Activities:

Encourage students to develop their own consumer group. The group can operate for a limited period of time. It doesn't necessarily have to be ongoing. It can test products, publish a newsletter, do educational workshops or lobby the government; all things done by national consumer groups.

ACTIVITY #3

BEING A CONSUMER REPRESENTATIVE

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Recognize the role of public hearings in soliciting consumer ideas and opinions.
2. Understand how an individual or a group can participate in a public hearing.
3. Put opinions and ideas into an effective written document - a brief.

Teacher Preparation:

Duplicate a class set of the handout "Writing a Brief"

Time:

Two class periods.

Procedure:

Have students identify a widespread concern in the school, for example:
- the quality of food in the cafeteria or canteen (healthy or junk food)
- the escalating cost of extracurricular activities, yearbook, gym clothes
- conservation in the school

Hold a simulated public hearing about the issue. Select three or four students to make up the panel for the hearing. Divide the rest of the class into small groups. Ask each group to write a brief to present to the panel at the hearing. The panel will need to research the topic fully so that they have a good background and can ask questions of each presenter.

Provide each small group with the handout "Writing a Brief".

When briefs have been developed, distribute them to the panel in advance of the time set for the hearing to review.

In preparation for the hearing, have each work group choose a presenter. Allow each group five minutes to present an overview of the key points in their brief.

Once all the briefs have been heard, the panel will make its recommendations regarding the problem. You may wish to go public with this activity and ask other classes to be observers at the hearing. The panel's recommendations can be sent to the principal or student council for consideration and published in the school newspaper.

Evaluation:

Objectives #1 and #2 have to do with students' attitudes. At the conclusion of the activity, do students make comments which suggest that they appreciate and understand the role of public hearings and the role of the individual or interest group at these hearings? Assess Objective #3 by examining students' written briefs. Is their "position" clearly stated on the briefs?

Additional Activities:

What are some additional ways that students as consumer citizens could push for a solution to the problem identified in Activity #2? For example: letters, editorials, petitions, boycotts, media, information displays, etc. Have students discuss which means might be most effective in advancing their concerns.

STUDENT HANDOUT:

WRITING A BRIEF

To accompany Activity #2, "Being a Consumer Representative"

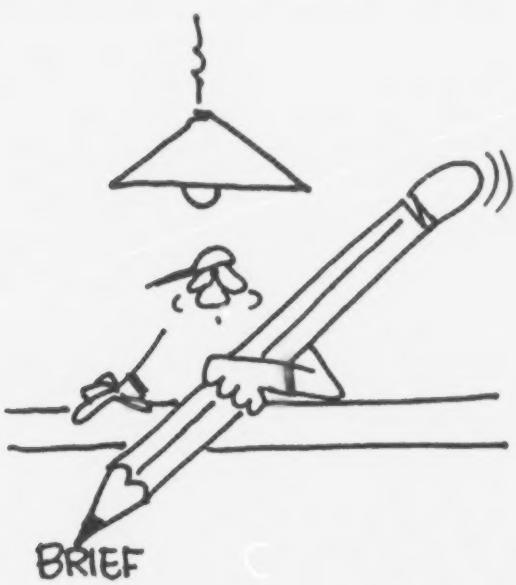
Briefs and position papers are both developed in the same way. Position papers are intended as an internal document for an organization to use to sort out a problem. A brief, however, is a public statement of a problem, your position and your recommendations for change.

Steps in Writing a Brief

1. **Identify the Problem.**
   What is the situation now? What do you want to change? What is the desired outcome?

2. **Research and Gather the Information**
   You must base your opinions on fact if you want to be considered seriously. Each statement must be supported by written proof, and each resolution must be justified by a logical argument. Here is a general plan for your study:
   - Outline the social, economic and historic background of the issue, including any municipal, provincial or federal legislation regulating it.
   - Determine the groups and individuals who would support or be against your position. Get input from those who will support you and find out how to influence those who are against your position.
   - Find out what has already been done on this issue: Where? When? By whom? What were the results?
   - Use the library. Look for books, magazines and news items on the topic.
   - Conduct a survey to determine public opinion, if possible.

3. **Identify Alternative Solutions.**
   Brainstorm solutions, then evaluate the alternative. Select the best alternatives for approval by your group. As a group, decide which of the solutions you wish to pursue. (In a formal organization you would present a position paper to the group. The group would adopt the position paper and determine which alternatives to pursue.)



Format for a Brief
A brief should be just that ... brief. Only one in sixty briefs are read!

1. **Cover Page**

   Submission to: _____

   Regarding what: _____

   Submission by: _____

   Date: _____

   Contact: _____

   Address: _____

   Phone no.: _____

2. **Table of Contents**

3. **Executive Summary**
   - 400 words or less
   - Identify concerns and recommendations

4. **Introduction**
   - Thank you for the opportunity to express concerns
   - Who your group is and who you represent
   - How your objectives and concerns relate to others

5. **Body of Brief**
   - Identify problem
   - Research used or conducted (for example, a survey or a poll)
   - Cite opposing interests and viewpoints. Include a counter-argument to refute those views.
   - State your concerns. Develop each concern in one or two paragraphs. (Numbering each concern makes the brief easier to read.)
   - Be concise!

6. **Recommendations:**
   - These will parallel your concerns
   - State each briefly in one or two sentences

7. **Thank You**
   - Thank the reader once again for his/her interest in your concerns

3. CHOICES AND CHALLENGES

For the Teacher

There are many different techniques groups may use to influence change in government policy or the performance of manufacturers and business. The type of "action" a group chooses depends on its expertise, resources, style and budget.

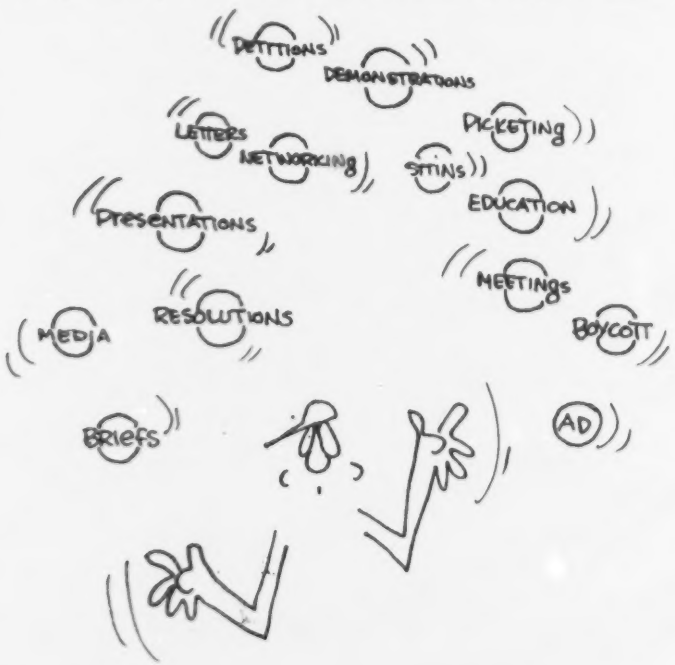
Here is a list of methods groups may implement to bring about desired changes:
- briefs
- resolutions
- media involvement (press releases, letters to the editor, open line shows)
- oral presentations to a commission, tribunal or legislative committee
- letter campaigns (praise those who support your position and provide constructive criticism to those who don't)
- networking with groups having similar interests
- petitions
- demonstrations
- picketing
- sit-ins
- education (speeches, workshops, displays, brochures)
- public meetings/debates
- providing background information (books, pamphlets and speeches)
- the local library
- boycotts
- placing an ad in local papers

When a group decides to lobby or influence change they begin by planning a strategy. The strategy may include one or many of these techniques. As with anything, a many-pronged approach is most effective. Groups must, however, consider their human and financial resources to avoid becoming overextended. A group with few members and a limited budget will be most effective if they base their strategy on one or two techniques which they can do well.

Related Content:

Module I, The Canadian Marketplace and You; Chapter B, The Consumer and the Economy; Topic 5, Choices and Challenges.

Module I, The Canadian Marketplace; Chapter C, Political and Social Systems Influence the Marketplace; Topic 1, Government: Public Policy, Regulations, Interest Groups.



ACTIVITY #1

TAKING ACTION: GETTING YOUR POINT ACROSS

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Define and explain a range of social action tools.
2. Select and use the appropriate strategies and tools for a social action initiative of their choice.

Time:

One class period for introduction. One or two hours out-of-class time. One-half class period for follow-up.

Procedure:

Have students identify a range of social action tools that can be used to promote change. Some of these tools are identified in the preceding "For the Teacher" section. List these on the board and describe situations in which each may or may not be appropriate.

Have students brainstorm a list of issues or changes they would like to promote in their school/community/province.

Examples include:
- waste recycling
- removing junk food from the school cafeteria
- stopping littering of the streets of their community or their school yard
- more green space and free recreation on municipal property

Select one topic of greatest interest to a majority of the students and plan an action strategy. Which techniques will you use? Divide students into groups, with each group responsible for carrying out a technique. Set timetable and proceed.

After actions have been taken, evaluate the strategy and determine which technique worked best.

Evaluation:

Assess Objective #1 by considering the discussion in which students identify social action tools. Are a range identified? Do students have ideas about situations under which each is appropriate? Objective #2 is not intended to produce specific results, rather it is intended to give students an opportunity to use at least one social action tool. Consider students' participation and enthusiasm in determining whether this objective has been met.

From: Leet, Don R., and Driggers, Joann. (1984). *Economic decisions for Canadian consumers*. Markham, Ont: Wadsworth. Used with permission.

APPENDIX

LIST OF APPENDICES

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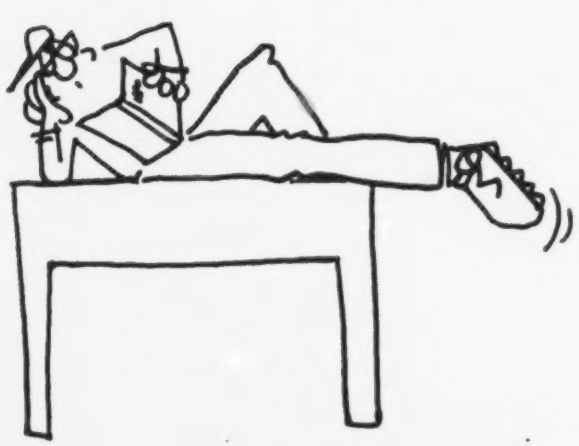


APPENDIX #1 - ORGANIZATIONS

Government Department of Consumer Affairs
Contact these agencies for information about consumer legislation. Some also provide educational services and information on specific products.

Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0C9
(819) 997-2938

Ontario Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations
555 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 2H6

Alberta Consumer and Corporate Affairs
10065 Jasper Avenue, Capital Square,
7th Floor
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 3B1
(403) 427-2201

British Columbia Ministry of Consumer and Corporate Affairs
940 Blanshard Street
Victoria, British Columbia
V8W 3E6
(604) 387-6831

Manitoba Consumers' Bureau

114 Garry Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 1G1

(204) 956-2040
(in Winnipeg)
1-800-782-0067
(in Manitoba)

New Brunswick Consumer and Corporate Affairs Branch
Department of Justice
Box 6000
Fredericton, New Brunswick
E3B 5H1
(506) 453-2659

Newfoundland Consumer Affairs Division
Department of Justice
Elizabeth Towers, Box 999
St. John's Newfoundland
A1C 5T7
(709) 737-2600

Northwest Territories Consumer Services
Department of Justice and Public Services
Government of the Northwest Territories
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
X1A 2L9
(403) 873-7125

Nova Scotia Department of Consumer Affairs
Consumer Services Division
5151 Terminal Road, Box 998
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 2X3
(902) 424-4690

Quebec Office de la Protection du Consommateur
6, rue de l'Université
Rez-de-Chaussée
Quebec, Quebec
G1B 5J8
(418) 643-1557

Saskatchewan Family Foundation
Consumer Education and Marketplace Relations Branch
1871 Smith Street
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4P 3V7
(306) 787-3938

Yukon Territory Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs
Government of the Yukon Territory
Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon Territory
Y1A 2C6
(403) 667-5312

Consumers' Association of Canada
The Consumers' Association of Canada is an advocacy group for consumers. It speaks out on issues of importance to consumers. As well, it tests specific products and services and makes the results of its test available to consumers.

Consumers' Association of Canada
National Office
Box 9300
Ottawa, Ontario
K1G 3T9

Alberta Office:
304 - 10136 - 100 St.
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 0P1

British Columbia Office:
103 - 163 West Hastings
Vancouver, British Columbia
V6B 1H5

Manitoba Office:
21 - 222 Osborne St. S.
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3L 1Z3

Westman Office:
935 - 26th Street
Brandon, Manitoba
R7B 2B7

Newfoundland Office:
92 Old Topsail Rd.
St. Johns Newfoundland
A1E 2A8

Northwest Territories Office:
Box 995
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
X1A 2N7

Nova Scotia Office:
Box 1867
Stellarton, Nova Scotia
B0K 1S0

Ontario Office:
403 - 234 Eglinton Ave. E.
Toronto, Ontario
M4P 1K5

Quebec Office:
4823 Sherbrooke St. W.
Montreal, Quebec
H3Z 1G7

Saskatchewan Office:
136 Ave. F South
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
S7M 1S8

Environmental Associations
A few national environmental associations are listed below. Check the local phone book or with your public library for information about environmental associations in your area.

Canadian Environmental Network (CEN)
P.O. Box 1289, Station B
Ottawa, Ontario
K1P 5R3

Canadian Nature Federation
453 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Ontario
K1N 6Z4

Canadian Wildlife Federation
1673 Carling Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario
K2A 3Z1

Directory of Canadian Women Specializing in Global Issues
c/o Canadian Council for International Co-operation
1 Nicholas Street, Suite 300
Ottawa, Ontario
K1N 7B7

Environment Canada
Environment Protection Service
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 1C8

Friends of the Earth
251 Laurier Avenue West
Suite 701
Ottawa, Ontario
K1P 5J6

Greenpeace
Ontario Branch Office
580 Bloor Street West
Toronto, Ontario
M6G 1K1

Pollution Probe
12 Madison Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
M5R 2S1

Solar Energy Society of Canada
11 York Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1N 5S7

World Wildlife Fund Canada
60 St. Clair Avenue East
Suite 201
Toronto, Ontario
M5T 1N5

Other Organizations

The agencies listed below are mentioned in the body of **Project Real World** and users are referred to the appendix for full addresses.

Canadian Standards Association
178 Rexdale Boulevard
Toronto, Ontario
M9W 1R3

Canadian Radio, TV and
Telecommunication Commission (CRTC)
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N2

Health Protection Branch
Health and Welfare Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0L2

Direct Sellers Association
4950 Yonge Street, Suite 1400
North York, Ontario
M2N 6K1

APPENDIX #2 - WORKING IN SMALL GROUPS

Small group learning units are a good way to increase teacher and student communication.

Small groups increase flexibility and help students adopt more independent and responsible learning methods and become more self-disciplined (Stanford 1977).

With small groups, students can become active participants in the classroom, and more motivated to achieve.

The purpose of small group learning is to share information, solve problems, make decisions or help each other learn content or process.

Tips for using small groups:

1. Use groups of 4 to 8 students.
2. Provide space with proper furniture and good acoustics.
3. Make sure that group leaders fully understand their role.
4. Make sure that group members fully understand their role.
5. If necessary, give students background information on the topic being discussed.
6. The topic should stimulate thinking and help students realize that any number of "correct answers", and a variety of legitimate viewpoints can exist.
7. Give students clear objectives. What is the purpose? (You may wish to have students define the objectives.)
8. The classroom climate should be friendly and nonthreatening. Group members need acceptance, trust and security so that they can contribute freely, without teacher or other pressure or censure.

Kinds of Small Groups

Depending on what you want to do - what your topic or task is for the students - there are different types of small groups you can use:

1. **Discussion Group**
   - A discussion group encourages students to become involved with their peers. It recognizes the importance of being able to work with others.
   - The teacher must provide students with sufficient background information for the discussion of a clear understanding of the objectives.
   - This is a good way to handle classroom, community or national issues.
2. **Brainstorming Group**
   - Brainstorming is a fun way to encourage creative thinking and problem-solving.
   - It stimulates individual student's participation and is nonthreatening so can draw out shy students.
   - Students, in a set time, are asked to come up with as many ideas or suggestions on a topic as they can.
   - Quantity of ideas is desired, freewheeling is effective and hitchhiking on their group or individual ideas is permitted.
   - Judgement is deferred until the end and criticism is not allowed.
   - This is a good way to introduce students to other small group work.

3. **Buzz Group**
   - Small clusters (4 to 7 students) are grouped for a short time (5 to 10 minutes) to seek the solution to an issue or problem.
   - A recorder and leader are chosen quickly in each group.
   - Alternatives to the issue are sought. The pros and cons of these are considered, agreement is sought and a solution is proposed.
   - Teachers can use Buzz groups on many occasions in the classroom. For example, when an issue is raised during a lesson, you can announce a buzz group session to explore it.

4. **Think-Pair-Share Group** (Lyman, 1985)
   - This method extends students' thinking and interaction.
   - The teacher begins with a short presentation on the topic. To encourage students to consider more fully what was explained, the teacher poses one question and asks students to spend a minute or two thinking alone about the issue.
   - Students are then assigned to pairs to share what they were thinking. One student makes a statement and the other must paraphrase it until the position of the student who made the statement is understood. This is followed by a reversal of the statement-maker and paraphraser roles.
   - Students (pairs) then report back to the whole group or other pairs.

5. **Problem Solving Group**
   - Group members, in a systematic way, seek the solution to a problem.
   - Problem-solving groups are based on the "Scientific Method."

   The steps are:
   - **problem definition,**
   - **brainstorm the likely causes of the problem,**
   - **decide the most likely cause,**
   - **brainstorm potential solutions,**
   - **select the most likely solution** (based on determination of pros and cons of alternatives), and
   - **decide when and how to implement the solution.**

6. **Tutorial Group**
   - Tutorial groups are set up to help students who need help or additional practice or for students who can benefit from enrichment.
   - A tutorial group is led by the teacher or by a student.
   - Greater attention to individual needs is possible and students can participate more actively when tutorial groups are used.

7. **Laboratory Group/Investigative Group**
   - A laboratory group is formed to complete a project, do an experiment, or practice something that has been presented by you.
   - A common example is a chemistry laboratory group.

8. **Role-Playing Group**
   - In a role-playing group, each group member is assigned a role to assume on a controversial topic.
   - Students may or may not agree with the stance they have been given to present or defend.
   - A role-playing group can bring out all sides of an issue or help students learn to understand the ideas or feelings of others.

9. **One-Three-Six Group**
   - The one-three-six group method can be used at almost any time during a lesson.
   - Students are asked, as individuals, to record their opinion on an issue. Then each student is asked to join two other students (form groups of three) and come to an agreement.
   - Two groups of three join and seek consensus.

10. **Panel, Symposium, Forum, Dialogue and Round Table**
    - Rather than the teacher presenting information and ideas through lectures, assigned questions or readings, students can play an active part in their learning.
    - This can be done by setting up a:
      - **panel** (a group of students discuss a topic before a class - chaired by either the teacher or a student),
      - **committee** (a group of students learn about a topic and report),
      - **symposium** (several students become "experts" in a topic and give brief presentations to the class),
      - **forum** (a class discussion in which a problem is explored through questions and answers and short statements under the guidance of a chairperson),
      - **dialogue** (two people discuss a topic in front of the class),
      - **round table** (a group of students discuss an issue in front of a class).
    - Students find these methods motivating. The teacher can provide a summary to ensure that content is organized, correctly understood and that it links to what is being studied.

11. **Value-Clarifying Group**
    - Groups are presented with a value-laden topic.
    - Each group is asked to find a number of solutions, discuss the pros and cons of these alternatives and decide.
    - The idea is for students to clarify their values and learn to understand and tolerate the values of others.
    - Value-clarifying groups should be used with care.
    - This is a controversial method. Some educators believe it to be motivating and invaluable for developing critical thinking skills; others believe the approach to be superficial and laden with inadequacies and problems.

The Teacher's Role in Small Groups

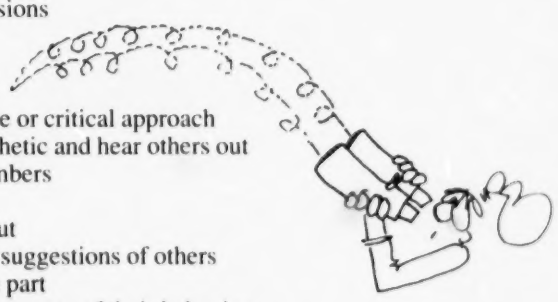
- Communicate objectives, select the topic or assignment and ensure the task is understood.
- Decide the size of the group.
- Assign the students to groups.
- See that the room is arranged to accommodate group work.
- Provide appropriate materials.
- Set the period for completion of the task.
- Inform the group of the behavior expected and teach interpersonal and group skills.
- Act as a resource person and monitor.
- Intervene as necessary to solve problems or to teach group skills.
- See that group effectiveness is monitored.
- Evaluate the product of the group and the individuals in it.
- Encourage a classroom climate that is nonthreatening and friendly.

The Students' Role in Small Groups (Stanford and Rourke, 1974)

- **Initiator** - gets discussion underway, helps the group organize, and keeps it moving toward the goal.
- **Contributor** - offers opinions, facts, anecdotes, or examples that could help the group solve the problem.
- **Clarifier** - helps make sure that the terms, the problem and contributions by group members are understood by all. If needed, the clarifier suggests that added information be sought.
- **Summarizer** - helps keep discussion relevant and to the point by bringing together and summarizing what has been discussed or learned to date. The summarizer also makes sure that everybody in the group understands where the group stands on an issue.
- **Evaluator** - keeps track of how well the group is progressing in its task and tactfully points out problems the group is having in working together.
- **Recorder** - records the main points of the discussion and a summary of the group's discussion. On occasion what was recorded is read back to help the group recall what was covered during discussion or to make sure that it is accurate.
- **Encourager** - facilitates participation by listening carefully, being friendly, complimenting members for their contributions and inviting participation.
- **Harmonizer** - is the peace-keeper, the "one who throws oil on troubled waters" by relieving tension (perhaps through humour), settling disputes, helping the group work out disagreements and suggesting compromises.

Characteristics of Effective Group Members.

Teach members to:



- be on time and attend all group sessions
- take an active part and contribute information and ideas
- contribute to group maintenance
- have a positive, rather than negative or critical approach
- listen when others speak, be empathetic and hear others out
- respect and interact with other members
- respect individual differences
- avoid prejudices and keep biases out
- seek, and be open to, the ideas and suggestions of others
- encourage non-contributors to take part
- accept responsibility for the consequences of their behavior
- be sensitive to the feelings and concerns of others
- avoid self-serving, judgemental, blaming, grandstanding or storytelling behavior
- be genuine and open
- support others and help them articulate their ideas
- help the group by summarizing, clarifying, mediating, praising and encouraging
- use problem-solving, decision-making, and conflict resolution frames of reference
- act as group leader, recorder, or group effectiveness monitor as appropriate

The duties of the group leader are to:

- see that the "problem" is clarified
- get discussion started
- keep discussion moving
- see that all phases of the problem are brought out
- keep discussion on topic
- encourage full participation and draw out "non-talkers"
- be objective
- rephrase, clarify statements or have others do this
- see that summaries or conclusions are made
- see that all members are treated with respect
- respect the confidence of the group
- report, or see that the thoughts of the group are fairly reported

The duties of participants are to:
- contribute a reasonable quantity of ideas and experiences
- keep prejudices out (at the very least, recognize them as such)
- keep on topic
- avoid "story-telling" and engaging in long, drawn-out arguments
- avoid making speeches to show off
- help phrase ideas and statements
- show respect for the ideas and opinions of others
- confine the argument to ideas and not engage in personal attacks
- help make summaries and reach a conclusion
- act as recorder or discussion evaluator as assigned.

Advantages of Using Small Groups

1. **Increased resources.** "Two heads are better than one." A group has access to more information and has a broader background than does any individual. More insights are likely to occur. A group can create more ideas.

2. **Members are often stimulated by others.** Members may be motivated to help the group succeed for social approval reasons. "Ideas beget ideas." "Hitchhiking" occurs (i.e., what one person thinks of or says may prompt an idea in another person, or suggestion by one person may be improved or extended by another).

3. **Better decisions can result.** Groups can produce better decisions than students working separately. Ideas can be clarified, refined, combined and evaluated through the interaction of group members; therefore, decisions should be superior.

4. **Group members may have a stronger commitment.** If group members help hammer something out, they tend to feel a stronger commitment to accept the result and follow through.

5. **Students are more actively involved.** Participation is more likely to be active rather than passive. This increases motivation, participation, learning, retention and commitment.

6. **Personal and social learnings take place.** Increased understanding of self, others and group processes can result. Interpersonal and social skills can be improved and an increased self-concept can result. Prejudices can be reduced. Students gain insights into the attitudes, reactions and sensitivities of others and may examine and modify their behavior. Ability to contribute rationally and constructively can be improved.

7. **Peer teaching is advantageous.** Studies confirm that peer teaching is powerful. Some things are learned better and faster when taught by peers. Ideas are put in "student language" rather than "teacher language," examples and explanations used by peers are often more relevant to students than teacher or text examples.

8. **Learning may be deepened.** Often material is easily forgotten since it often is just memorized and not really understood when direct teaching methods are used. When small groups are used it is more likely that students will understand the thinking skills or processes involved. When this occurs, learnings are more likely to be transferred to new situations.

Limitations of Using Small Groups

1. **Group decision-making takes time.** More time is required for decision-making or planning when it is done by a group than when it is done by an individual. The views of all must be heard and disagreements may occur that take time to resolve. No doubt, more material can be covered through methods such as lectures.
2. **Time may be seen to be wasted.** Discussions, if not well conducted, not only take time, they can waste it. Without able guidance or the use of group skills, discussion can wander, be misled, hindered, concerned with trivia, or lack of conclusiveness.
3. **Convictions may be suppressed.** Some members may conform just to avoid confrontation or risk censure. Less aggressive students may not be given a chance to present their ideas.
4. **Some tasks are better done by individuals.** Routine or simple tasks, or information acquisition may be better done by individuals.
5. **Talk may be substituted for action.** "Visiting" may take precedence over productivity. In some situations, groups may tend to be indecisive since no one person is solely responsible for action. One or two individuals may do all the work and other members may merely "ride on their coat tails".
6. **Some students prefer to work alone.** Unless the benefits of group work are taught, some students may rather work alone. They may feel they can learn better alone. Some individuals may be shy, lack social skills, or feel they will not be accepted.

Most of these disadvantages can be overcome by effective use of the small group teaching method. This, of course, requires careful planning, instruction and monitoring.

Assessing Small Group Effectiveness

You can tell if a group is going well. The climate is positive, people are on task and seem to be enjoying themselves. Everybody seems involved and discussion does not "drag."

You can assess how well a group is going by asking key questions. These can form the basis of making the group more effective. You can ask yourself why a particular pattern or behavior occurs and what you can do about it.

1. **Influence and Leadership**
   - Does anybody seem left out?
   - Does somebody dominate?
   - Is there rivalry?
2. **Communication**
   - Who do people look at when they talk?
   - Who talks to whom? How long? Who interrupts?
   - Are there sub-groups (cliques)?
   - What is the style? (questions, gestures, statements, tone of voice)
3. **Decision-making**
   - How are decisions made? Consensus? Voting?
   - How do members react to the decisions made?
4. **Atmosphere**
   - Is the climate happy? Tense? Apathetic?
   - Does the group stay on topic?
   - Are efforts made to include and respect all?

Good luck with your small groups!

Adapted from: Lang, H., with McBeath, A. (In Progress). *Fundamental principles and practices of teaching: A practical theory-based approach to planning and instruction.* Toronto: Holt, Rinehart & Winston. Used with permission.

TEACHER NOTES